

STANDING FIRM

'BY STANDING FIRM, YOU WILL GAIN LIFE.' LUKE 21:19



MAKADO VESPER



"Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain."

1 Corinthians 15:58

BOOK TITLE: Standing Firm

SCRIPTURE 1: “By standing firm, you will gain life.” Luke 21:19

SCRIPTURE 2: “Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labour in the Lord is not in vain.” 1 Corinthians 15: 58

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Dedication:

To all who stand in faith amid trials,

May you find in these pages the strength to persevere, the wisdom to discern,
and the courage to remain steadfast in the face of adversity.

May you stand firm in His truth and walk in the power of His promises.

Let your life be a testament to His unfailing grace.

Acknowledgments:

With deep gratitude, I extend my heartfelt thanks to those who have walked with me through this journey of writing.

To the church—your prayers, encouragement, and unwavering support have been a source of strength and inspiration.

To my family—your love, patience, and steadfast faith have been my constant anchor.

Above all, to God—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—may this work bring glory to You, for it is by Your grace alone that we stand firm.

— Vespers Makado

DEVOTIONS

Devotion 01 : The Burden Of Our Sins.....	01
Devotion 02 : Success And Prosperity Through Obedience.....	04
Devotion 03 : Righteousness First.....	07
Devotion 04 : Thanksgiving.....	10
Devotion 05 : Gentleness.....	13
Devotion 06 : Repentance.....	16
Devotion 07 : The Heart And The Mind.....	19
Devotion 08 : Salvation.....	21
Devotion 09 : True Beauty.....	24
Devotion 10 : The Lord's Mercy - Learning From Daniel.....	27
Devotion 11 : Our God Is Good To Us.....	30
Devotion 12 : Priests.....	33
Devotion 13 : Finding Favour With God.....	36
Devotion 14 : When God Intervenes.....	38
Devotion 15 : Choose Happiness Everyday.....	41
Devotion 16 : Do You Know?.....	44
Devotion 17 : Trouble Is Guaranteed.....	46
Devotion 18 : Peace.....	48
Devotion 19 : All To Him.....	51
Devotion 20 : Standing In Christ's Righteousness.....	54
Devotion 21 : The Vital Truth.....	57
Devotion 22 : The Vital - Concluded.....	61
Devotion 23 : Faithful, Just and Right.....	65
Devotion 24 : Your Funeral - Accepting Death.....	67
Devotion 25 : Obedience In The Face Of Grace.....	70
Devotion 26 : The Word.....	73
Devotion 27 : Jesus - The Ancient Of Days.....	76
Devotion 28 : The Word - Part Two.....	79
Devotion 29 : Exploring "The Word".....	81
Devotion 30 : The Art Of Witnessing.....	83

Introduction:

Title: Unshaken Faith

In **Standing Firm**, we embark on a journey of unwavering faith, discovering what it truly means to remain steadfast in Christ amid the challenges of life. In a world that seeks to shake our foundation, we are called to be rooted in His Word, standing firm against every trial and temptation.

Based on the words of Paul in Ephesians 6:13, this devotional is designed to strengthen your spirit, equip you with divine truth, and encourage you to hold fast to the promises of God. Each day's reflection will challenge you to examine your faith, fortify your spiritual armour, and stand unshaken in the midst of adversity.

Over the next 30 days, my prayer is that you will grow in resilience, boldness, and confidence in Christ. May these pages inspire you to stand firm in faith, unwavering in His truth, and victorious in His power.

With grace and strength,

— Vespers Makado

Preface:

Title: Strength in the Storm

Life brings trials that test our endurance, shake our confidence, and challenge our faith. Yet, Jesus calls us to stand firm, to be unmovable, and to trust in His unfailing love.

What does it mean to stand firm? It is not about merely surviving; it is about thriving in faith, anchored in the unshakable truth of God's Word. Standing firm is a choice—a decision to remain grounded in Christ, even when the storms rage and the world wavers.

This devotional will guide you through the spiritual discipline of standing firm.

Each day, we will explore Scriptures, prayers, and reflections that will strengthen your faith and equip you with the endurance to withstand the trials of life. My prayer is that this journey will transform your perspective, fortify your heart, and deepen your trust in God's sovereign plan.

May you stand firm in the unshakable foundation of Christ.

— Vespers Makado



DEVOTION 01

THE BURDEN OF OUR SINS

“After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice: “Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.” Revelation 7:9-10

From Makado Vespers:

The title says the burden of our sins. By burden I mean the trouble and problems that come from our sins. Our sins have consequences associated with them that trouble us. I will give you practical examples showing you the burden of our sins. Let's start by defining what sin is.

James 4:17 “If anyone, then, knows the good they ought to do and doesn’t do it, it is sin for them.”

James says anyone who knows the good they are supposed to do and does not do it sins. The word of God tells us the good we are supposed to do. Read Galatians 5 from verse 19. We are not supposed to do adultery or witchcraft or any bad thing mentioned there. The moment we do that, it is sin for us. Sin is simply disobeying God commands or God's law. We get that definition from John.

1 John 3:4 “Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.”

John says sin is the transgression of the law. Sin is breaking the law. We know the law of God. Read Exodus 20, the law coming through Moses. The law says do not steal, do not kill, do not murder.

Now the point of this sermon is the burden that come due to sins, that sin we defined above. If you're to commit adultery with a man's wife, you will be beaten by the husband.

Being beaten is the trouble/problems that comes from that sin. That's the burden of that sin. If you steal, you are sent to prison. Being sent to prison is the burden of the sin of stealing. If you drink beer your health is at risk. If you smoke and take drugs, you will have lung cancer. Lung cancer is the burden of the sin of smoking and drinking or taking drugs. If you are a prostitute, you will have many sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Those diseases are the burdens of the sin of prostitution.

I think you can see now that our sins have burdens to us. There are consequences we face for disobeying God. Jesus knew the burdens and he said come to me you who are burdened and I will give you rest.

Matthew 11:28 “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”

Unto Jesus we can throw the burdens of our sins. We come to Jesus carrying the burdens of our sins and He frees us from them. So we throw at Calvary the burdens of our sin.

Psalm 38:4 “My guilt has overwhelmed me like a burden too heavy to bear.”

Galatians 5:1 “It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.”

David said my guilty overwhelmed me. He says it was a burden too heavy to bear. Sleeping with Uriah's wife, the burden of that sin was a guilty conscience. And for him it was a heavy burden. But Paul in Galatians 5 then said Christ set us free. He says do not be burdened by the yoke of slavery. I say to you, don't be burdened again by the trouble of your sin. Throw it at Calvary because on it Christ set us free.

Here is an example of someone to whom Jesus removed the burden of her sin away from her. He was caught in the midst of committing adultery. That was the sin she committed. The burden was that people wanted to stone her. But Jesus set her free from the burden of her sins and she wasn't stoned.

Christ sets us free from the burdens of our sins. He removes them from us. Our sins carry burdens. Do not sin, there are burdens which come with sin. But I love what Jesus said to her after setting her free from the burden of her sin. Jesus said go and sin no more.

John 8:11 “No one, sir,” she said. “Then neither do I condemn you,” Jesus declared. “Go now and leave your life of sin.”

So let's remember that our sins have burdens. Our sins bring us trouble and burdens. But Jesus frees us from all trouble our sins bring us. Let's go now and sin no more.

Revelation 7:9-10 “After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice: “Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.”

There was a great multitude that no one could count. It was composed of all tribes, all nations, all languages and all people. They were all standing before the Lamb. I like when they cried out and said Salvation belongs to the Lamb. Jesus is the Lamb. He is the Lamb that takes away the sin of the world. John the baptist said that.

John 1:29 "The next day John saw Jesus coming to him and said, Look! There is the Lamb of God, Who takes away the sin of the world! [Exod. 12:3; Isa. 53:7.]"



DEVOTION 02

SUCCESS AND PROSPERITY THROUGH OBEDIENCE

“Ye shall observe to do therefore as the LORD your God hath commanded you: ye shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left. Ye shall walk in all the ways which the LORD your God hath commanded you, that ye may live, and that it may be well with you, and that ye may prolong your days in the land which ye shall possess.” Deuteronomy 5:32-33

From Makado Vespers:

We are living in a difficult and challenging world in literally all facets of life. Economically other individuals struggle. Fees had to be paid, rent has to be paid, the house has to be maintained, the family wants to be sustained daily through food, there are other basic commodities of life you need and are failing to obtain like clothes, food and shelter.

Even emotionally too, life is a struggle, the relationships aren't working, both with your friends, relatives and lovers. The divorce papers are on the table. Health wise, it's a struggle again. The doctor has just given you a sad report. You didn't sleep all week due to pain in the body. You have depression and sadness. You have no joy. Now you have BP (Blood Pressure). These are the problems we face in life. They are the reasons why our lives are uncomfortable. They are the enemies of our success and prosperity. They take away success and prosperity from us.

Everyone's goal is really to fight and overcome all the challenges I have cited above. We want victory over them. We want to be rich, we want to be prosperous. We don't want to be sick. We want to afford and be able to pay our bills. We want a steady and stable lifestyle. The world is full of ways you can use to achieve success and prosperity. If you check on social media, it's full of ten ways to be successful. 30 ways to remain healthy. 50 keys to prosperity. How to break the poverty cycle. How to be rich in 7 months. How to be a billionaire. How to live stress free. How to soar above depression. But ignoring what the world says to us, what's God's secret to success.

In this devotion I unveil God's secret to success and prosperity. It's only one. If you study the bible carefully, you will come across it. Let's read scripture from the bible, God telling us what we have to do in order to be successful and prosperous.

Deuteronomy 5:32-33 “Ye shall observe to do therefore as the LORD your God hath commanded you: ye shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left. Ye shall walk in all the ways which the LORD your God hath commanded you, that ye may live, and that it may be well with you, and that ye may prolong your days in the land which ye shall possess.”

Obedying God is the secret to success. You have to observe and do what the Lord has commanded, then only can it be well with you. Your finances and all things will be okay. This verse below makes the idea clear.

Isaiah 1:19 If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land:

God says if you are obedient, you will eat the good of the land. That means if you obey God, success and prosperity are yours. So God's path or key to our personal success, prosperity and health is obeying God. He says if you obey me, you will be health.

Exodus 23:25-26 "You shall serve the Lord your God; He shall bless your bread and water, and I will take sickness from your midst. None shall lose her young by miscarriage or be barren in your land; I will fulfil the number of your days."

If we obey God, we will prosper. Obedience to God is our key to prosperity. Read the scripture below.

Deuteronomy 7:11-15 “Therefore, take care to follow the commands, decrees and laws I give you today. If you pay attention to these laws and are careful to follow them, then the Lord your God will keep his covenant of love with you, as he swore to your ancestors. He will love you and bless you and increase your numbers. He will bless the fruit of your womb, the crops of your land—your grain, new wine and olive oil—the calves of your herds and the lambs of your flocks in the land he swore to your ancestors to give you. You will be blessed more than any other people; none of your men or women will be childless, nor will any of your livestock be without young. The Lord will keep you free from every disease. He will not inflict on you the horrible diseases you knew in Egypt, but he will inflict them on all who hate you.”

If we obey God, He will prosper us in all facets of life. In our finances and health. Here is evidence from the bible that when the Israelites were obedient, no disaster befell them.

Numbers 23:21 “No misfortune is seen in Jacob, no misery observed in Israel. The Lord their God is with them; the shout of the King is among them.

Balaam said there is no misfortune, no misery observed because their God is with them. Balaam goes on to say this in the next scripture.

Numbers 23:23 "There is no divination against Jacob, no evil omens against Israel. It will now be said of Jacob and of Israel, ‘See what God has done!’

When you walk with God, he prospers you. This verse even makes it clear.

Joshua 1:7 “Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go.

Even Jesus says seek first the kingdom and all things will be added unto you.

Matthew 6:33 "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.'

Someone might ask, what exactly does obeying God mean? What are you supposed to do. To obey God is to pursue righteousness.

1 Timothy 6:11 "But you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness."

It is to wear the new self, created after God's own righteousness and holiness.

Ephesians 4:24 "and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness."

What are the works associated with righteousness and those associated with unrighteousness? Jesus Himself mentions them. Let's read from the Amplified Version.

Mark 7:20-23 (AMP) “And He said, what comes out of a man is what makes a man unclean and renders [him] unhallowed. For from within, [that is] out of the hearts of men, come base and wicked thoughts, sexual immorality, stealing, murder, adultery, Coveting (a greedy desire to have more wealth), dangerous and destructive wickedness, deceit; unrestrained (indecent) conduct; an evil eye (envy), slander (evil speaking, malicious misrepresentation, abusiveness), pride (the sin of an uplifted heart against God and man), foolishness (folly, lack of sense, recklessness, thoughtlessness). All these evil [purposes and desires] come from within, and they make the man unclean and render him unhallowed.”



DEVOTION 03

RIGHTEOUSNESS FIRST

“These people honour me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. They worship me in vain; their teachings are merely human rules.” Matthew 15:8-9

From Makado Vespers:

Jesus quotes God in Isaiah saying these people honour me with their lips but their hearts are far from me.

Matthew 15:8-9 “These people honour me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. They worship me in vain; their teachings are merely human rules.”

God was saying the people worship with their lips but their hearts are far from me. He says in vain they worship me. Here is an example of worship done in vain. Let's see why it becomes in vain.

Matthew 23:23 “Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices—mint, dill and cumin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former.

Jesus says you Pharisees; you are hypocrites. Simply because you give your tithes. Jesus says you neglected the more important matters, which are justice, mercy and faithfulness. Jesus said you skipped these, you didn't obey this. Jesus says you didn't prioritise these. But you prioritised tithes and giving. So Jesus says you made the latter more important, ignoring the former.

Justice, mercy and faithfulness are the foundational blocks for our righteousness. So Christ is saying before you worship, before you give, before you pray and serve the Lord, make sure first that you have kept and prioritised righteousness and holiness. It's the former that has to be prioritised before the latter.

Otherwise your worship, your prayer, your giving and service would be in vain. It's clear in Isaiah, let's read it from Isaiah. We will use the Amplified Bible Version.

Isaiah 1:10-15 “Hear [O Jerusalem] the word of the Lord, you rulers or judges of [another] Sodom! Give ear to the law and the teaching of our God, you people of [another] Gomorrah! To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices to Me [unless they are the offering of the heart]? says the Lord. I have had enough of the burnt offerings of rams and the fat of fed beasts [without obedience]; and I do not delight in the blood of bulls or of lambs or of he-goats [without righteousness]. When you come to appear before Me, who requires of you that your [unholy feet] trample My courts? Bring no more offerings of vanity (emptiness, falsity, vainglory, and futility); [your hollow offering of] incense is an abomination to Me; the New Moons and Sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot endure—[it is] iniquity and profanation, even the solemn meeting. Your New Moon festivals and your [hypocritical] appointed feasts My soul hates. They are an oppressive burden to Me; I am weary of bearing them. And when you spread forth your hands [in prayer, imploring help], I will hide My eyes from you; even though you make many prayers, I will not hear. Your hands are full of blood!”

God in Isaiah starts by saying listen to the instruction of the Lord. God then says the multitude of your sacrifices. Multitude refers to the size. Other people give too much, so much. But God is saying what are they to me? He said what does your sacrifices mean to me? God says I have more than enough of your burnt offerings and sacrifices without your obedience and righteousness.

The sacrifices in the new testament now are our prayers and worship and giving. God is saying I have had more than enough of your prayers, worship and giving without your obedience and righteousness. He says I take no pleasure in that. God is saying you trample before my courts with your unholy feet. God said who required that from you.

God says bring no more sacrifices and no more offering. To us He is saying bring no more prayers and worship or praise songs and giving. God is saying I cannot endure anymore, it is sin. God talks about festivals. We have so many festivals, our church gatherings, our church parties and giving to the poor, God says it's an oppressive burden to me. He says He is weary of bearing them. God says when you pray, I will hide my face from you. When you pray, He said I will not hear you. The same thing He said in chapter 59 of Isaiah.

Isaiah 59:1-2 "BEHOLD, THE Lord's hand is not shortened at all, that it cannot save, nor His ear dull with deafness, that it cannot hear. But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear."

So what does the Lord want? Let's finish in Isaiah 1, the chapter we were reading.

Isaiah 1:16-19 “Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; put away the evil of your doings from before My eyes! Cease to do evil, Learn to do right! Seek justice, relieve the oppressed, and correct the oppressor. Defend the fatherless, plead for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together, says the Lord. Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be like wool. If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land;”

Above God lists all that He wants. I will take the part that says learn to do right. Let's try to be holy people before God. It will make our prayers, worship and giving even more effective. God wants us to live righteously. In the scripture above He said cease to do evil. He said seek justice and you have to be willing and obedient. He said come, and I will remove your sin from you. Let's clear our sins and make efforts to be holy before we come to God. Righteousness has to come first. Let's repent completely before we start serving God. Let's read last scripture from Peter using the Amplified Bible Version.

1 Peter 1:14-17 “[Live] as children of obedience [to God]; do not conform yourselves to the evil desires [that governed you] in your former ignorance [when you did not know the requirements of the Gospel]. But as the One Who called you is holy, you yourselves also be holy in all your conduct and manner of living. For it is written, You shall be holy, for I am holy. And if you call upon Him as [your] Father Who judges each one impartially according to what he does, [then] you should conduct yourselves with true reverence throughout the time of your temporary residence [on the earth, whether long or short].



DEVOTION 04

THANKSGIVING

“Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name.” Psalms 100:4

From Makado Vespers:

How are we to enter into the courts of God? What's supposed to go in front before all else? What's supposed to lead us? What is it that we bring first before all things? What do we enter the Lord's courts with?

Psalms 100:4 “Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name.”

We enter into His courts with thanksgiving. We come before God with gratitude. Our gratitude goes before us. Our gratitude is us giving him thanks. We give thanks to God for all things. One which includes the day. As you start the day, thank Him for the day He has made. As you finish and close the day, thank Him for the day you made. Remember that each day is a marvellous day God has made.

Psalms 118:24 “This is the day which the LORD hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.”

Today is the day God had made. For this day to exist, it's because of God. For each day to exist, it's because of God. For the sun to shine, for rain to pour, for the wind to blow. For you to be able to breathe, to take in oxygen, it's because of God. It's God who created all animals and trees that you see each day. So thank God for each day for it is a day that God has made.

The food you eat daily, it came from God. All fruits were made by God. All foods come from plants made by God. The clothes you wear come from cotton, a plant God made. The car you were in was made from metal, which came from minerals, minerals which come from the earth (soil) God made.

Even the money you are holding, it is made by paper, which is made from trees that God made. Without God that money wouldn't exist. All things exist because of God.

The point I want you to see is that for today and everything in today to exist, it's because of God. If we take away God from today and take away everything God made from today, nothing remains, today won't remain. Even you as an individual, you were made by God. For you to be here it's because of God. So we ought to have gratitude to God and thank Him for making today. Now we simply have to rejoice in today, the day that God made.

We have to look at all the good things happening today and thank God for it. That's the gratitude we bring before His presence. Thank God that you are alive. As you wake up, thank God for protecting you through the night. Thank God that your family is around, thank God that you have enough food to sustain you through the day. Thank God that you have clothes to wear. Thank God that His presence is in you. Thank God that He sent Jesus to die for you and that you are saved.

We are not only to thank God for the good things only. Even the bad things, we have to thank God for it. We have to thank God for pain, we have to thank God for our struggles and difficulties. Peter says these struggles contribute to the praise and glory we will receive when Jesus comes.

1 Peter 1:6-7 "[You should] be exceedingly glad on this account, though now for a little while you may be distressed by trials and suffer temptations, So that [the genuineness] of your faith may be tested, [your faith] which is infinitely more precious than the perishable gold which is tested and purified by fire. [This proving of your faith is intended] to redound to [your] praise and glory and honor when Jesus Christ (the Messiah, the Anointed One) is revealed."

Our struggles and pains benefit us more than they harm us. It's nicer that we face trouble and persecution. I personally consider failure, trouble and challenges sweet. Because the bible reveals why we face them. We face them because they are testing our faith. But once we overcome, we will receive praise and honour and glory when Jesus Christ is revealed. So start loving your problems and appreciating their existence, it's for your benefit after all. They are testing our faith.

"Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial, because when they have stood the test, they will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him." - James 1:12 (NIV)

"Our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us." Romans 8:18 (NIV)

"For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all." - 2 Corinthians 4:17 (NIV)

Let's thank God for our problems for simply because they exist, we will have so many rewards. So we don't have a reason not to thank God for them. We have to thank God in all circumstances. Let's read the following scriptures which say we have to thank God for all things.

1 Thessalonians 5:18 "Thank [God] in everything [no matter what the circumstances may be, be thankful and give thanks], for this is the will of God for you [who are] in Christ Jesus [the Revealer and Mediator of that will]."

Ephesians 5:20 "At all times and for everything giving thanks in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God the Father."

Colossians 3:17 "And whatever you do [no matter what it is] in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus and in [dependence upon] His Person, giving praise to God the Father through Him."

Philippians 4:6 "Do not fret or have any anxiety about anything, but in every circumstance and in everything, by prayer and petition (definite requests), with thanksgiving, continue to make your wants known to God."

So we have to thank God in all circumstances. No matter good or bad circumstances. We have to thank God for each day because for each day to exist with it's different weather, either sunny or rainy it's because of God. Thank God before the day starts and after the day ends. We are to be thankful in all circumstances. Jesus then says each day will have it's own trouble.

Matthew 6:34 "So do not worry or be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will have worries and anxieties of its own. Sufficient for each day is its own trouble."

And God's word clearly warns us that we are not to complain before God for the trouble we face.

Numbers 11:1 "Now the people complained about their hardships in the hearing of the Lord, and when he heard them his anger was aroused. Then fire from the Lord burned among them and consumed some of the outskirts of the camp."

The people complained and God destroyed them. That means we are to be thankful to God even for the trouble we face today. We are to be thankful in all circumstances, whether good or bad. We have to give thanks always. We enter His courts with thanksgiving. We start the day by giving thanks and finish also by giving thanks. Let us learn how to be content or satisfied in every situation because being content starts first before we can give thanks. Let's learn to be satisfied either in sickness or in health. Whether in success or in failure. Whether in plenty or in need.

Philippians 4:11-13 "I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do all this through him who gives me strength."

Let's learn to be satisfied, that's how we can give thanks. I'm not saying have plenty so you can start being satisfied. Be satisfied even with the little you have and give thanks for it. Paul says I have learnt the secret of being content even in hunger and in want. No matter the trouble, be content and thank God for it. It was God's will for Joseph to go into prison. Joseph had to thank God for putting him in prison, for allowing his brothers to sell him, for being falsely accused by Potiphar's wife. Joseph had to thank God for all that because that was his path to greatness and to being in the king's palace. Let's thank God for everything, our good moments and even our trouble and persecution, remembering that in all things God is working for our good.

Romans 8:28 (AMP) "We are assured and know that [God being a partner in their labour] all things work together and are [fitting into a plan] for good to and for those who love God and are called according to [His] design and purpose."



DEVOTION 05

GENTLENESS

"Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near." Philippians 4:5

From Makado Vespers:

What kind of personalities do we have as followers of Christ? What kind of characters do we have? Our faith and belief in Christ is supposed to be reflected in our character, personality and speech as well. What kind of character are you to have? Some believers in Christ are very violent people. Generally they are violent and always in the mood of fighting and physically beating other people; but is that the character we ought to have now that we came to Christ.

Other believers have serious anger issues. Most of the time during the day they are just angry. Always angry and sad. Talking to them is difficult because the kind of replies that come from them would crash your spirit. Very violent and bitter and cold in their speech. Other believers are bitter. They have this bitterness and internal sadness. They are deeply buried under depression. But are those the kind of characters we ought to display now that we are standing on a solid rock who is Christ?

Other members in Christ have a quick temper. They are quick to be irritated and quick to get angry. Yet the bible clearly tells us to be slow to anger.

James 1:19-20 (AMP) "Understand [this], my beloved brethren. Let every man be quick to hear [a ready listener], slow to speak, slow to take offense and to get angry. For man's anger does not promote the righteousness God [wishes and requires]."

The bible clearly said it, be slow to become angry. In other words, be long-tempered. It told us why, it said because man's anger does not promote the righteousness of God. Yet other believers and Christians have literally serious anger issues. Others are quarrelsome. Very quarrelsome. How can we say Christ lives in us when we display such bad and negative characters. What kind of personality does Christ want us to display. I want to talk only about one personality - which is gentleness. Let's read from the bible.

Philippians 4:5 "Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near."

Paul says let your gentleness be evident to all. In other words, let all people recognise and see openly your gentleness. Let everyone recognise how gentle of a person you are. Let those around you see that. Let your husband, let your wife, let your children, let your parents, let your neighbours, let your churchmates, let your clients, let your workmates, let the people in the same bus with you, let the people you meet in the supermarket, let the people you meet in the bank recognise and see how gentle you are. Your gentleness must be evident to all. Let's look at what the opposite of gentleness is.

The opposite of gentleness is harshness which is being rough, severe, or unkind in one's words or actions. Another opposite is brutality which is showing cruelty, violence, or a lack of compassion. Another is coarseness that is being crude, rough, or unrefined in one's behavior or speech. The fourth opposite is abrasiveness that is being unpleasantly rough or harsh in one's manner or tone. The last one is showing a lack of empathy, compassion, or concern for others.

Gentleness now is kindness which is showing concern and care for others. Gentleness is also humility which is being modest and unassuming in one's words and actions. Gentleness also is soft-spokenness which is speaking in a calm, gentle, and respectful tone. Gentleness also is compassion that is showing empathy and understanding towards others. Gentleness also is self-control that is managing one's emotions and reactions to maintain a peaceful demeanor.

Let's look at the instance when Jesus tells us to be gentle. I will read using the New International Version.

Matthew 11:28-30

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

Jesus says come to me you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest. Jesus then says then says I want you to take my yoke upon you and learn from me. So Jesus wants us to learn from him. The next question is, what does Jesus want us to learn specifically from Him? The next part says for I am gentle and humble in heart. So Jesus wants us to learn to be gentle and to be humble in heart. He wants us to learn that from Him; to be gentle and humble in heart.

After we learn to be gentle and humble at heart, what will happen, let's see what Jesus says. He says and you will find rest for your souls. So in other words we find rest for our souls the moment we learn how to be gentle. The other problems we are facing are simply because we are not gentle people. Being gentle will give your soul rest. You automatically become free from anger, bitterness, depression, violence and physical fights and misunderstandings with people simply by being gentle. Let's finish reading that scripture.

He closes by saying for my yoke is easy and my burden is light. Jesus confirms it, He says learning how to be gentle is an easy yoke with a light burden. So you have to be gentle. I gave you all reasons why you should be gentle, let your gentleness be evident to all. The gentleness of Jesus even surprised those who wanted to kill him. He was quiet and gave no reply to all accusations he was given.

Mark 15:5 "But Jesus still made no reply, and Pilate was amazed."

Jesus made no reply and Pilate was amazed. Look at how gentle Jesus was. He remained quiet. I listed what it means to be gentle and the opposite of being gentle. Jesus said let's us learn to be gentle. Let's close with verses which say we have to be gentle.

Galatians 5:23 "gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law."

Ephesians 4:2 "Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love."

Colossians 3:12 "Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience."

1 Timothy 3:3 "not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money."

1 Timothy 6:11 "But you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness."

Titus 3:2 "to slander no one, to be peaceable and considerate, and always to be gentle toward everyone."

1 Peter 3:4 "Rather, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight."

1 Peter 3:15 "But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect,"



DEVOTION 06

REPENTANCE

“Bear fruits that are deserving and consistent with [your] repentance [that is, conduct worthy of a heart changed, a heart abhorring sin]. And do not begin to say to yourselves, We have Abraham as our father; for I tell you that God is able from these stones to raise up descendants for Abraham.” Luke 3:8

From Makado Vespers:

John the baptist preached a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.

Luke 3:3 "He went into all the country around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins."

In simple John was saying repent so you can enter into the kingdom of God.

Matthew 3:1-2 "In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near."

Let's read the same scripture from the Amplified Bible Version and hear how it defines repentance.

Matthew 3:1-2 "IN THOSE days there appeared John the Baptist, preaching in the Wilderness (Desert) of Judea. And saying, Repent (think differently; change your mind, regretting your sins and changing your conduct), for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

Repentance has been defined by the Amplified Bible Version as thinking differently, and changing your mind. Repenting is also regretting our sins. Do we regret our sins? Or we want to return to our former life because we are pleased with it. Repentance is changing your conduct. Having a new conduct. Let me dwell a little on thinking differently and changing your mind. What is to think differently, how are you to think differently?

What are you to think about? Let's read the scripture below.

Colossians 3:2 (AMP) "And set your minds and keep them set on what is above (the higher things), not on the things that are on the earth."

Paul says set your mind on things above. To set your mind on things above is to live heavenly mandated. Aware of the presence of God and his righteousness. That's thinking differently, it's having the things of God in mind.

Mark 8:33 "But when Jesus turned and looked at his disciples, he rebuked Peter. "Get behind me, Satan!" he said. "You do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns."

Thinking differently is having in mind the things of God and not of man. The same scripture is explained via the Amplified Bible Version. Let's read from it.

Mark 8:33 "But turning around [His back to Peter] and seeing His disciples, He rebuked Peter, saying, Get behind Me, Satan! For you do not have a mind intent on promoting what God wills, but what pleases men [you are not on God's side, but that of men]."

It said you do not have a mind intent on promoting what God wills. It said you are not on God's side. The opposite is a mind that promotes what pleases man. It's being on man's side. So how do you get on God's side? Peter tells us how. Let's read using the Amplified Bible Version.

1 Peter 1:14-19 "[Live] as children of obedience [to God]; do not conform yourselves to the evil desires [that governed you] in your former ignorance [when you did not know the requirements of the Gospel]. But as the One Who called you is holy, you yourselves also be holy in all your conduct and manner of living. For it is written, You shall be holy, for I am holy. And if you call upon Him as [your] Father Who judges each one impartially according to what he does, [then] you should conduct yourselves with true reverence throughout the time of your temporary residence [on the earth, whether long or short]. You must know (recognize) that you were redeemed (ransomed) from the useless (fruitless) way of living inherited by tradition from [your] forefathers, not with corruptible things [such as] silver and gold, But [you were purchased] with the precious blood of Christ (the Messiah), like that of a [sacrificial] lamb without blemish or spot."

To get on God's side, you have to live as children of obedience to God. That means you no longer follow the evil desires you once lived in when you did not know the requirements of the gospel, Peter says. The One who calls us is holy, so we also ought to be holy. One way to encourage ourselves to do that is to remember that our residence on earth is temporary. We won't be here forever.

I like verse 18 and 19 because it matches with repentance. It says recognise that you were redeemed from such a life. You must be able to see that you no longer live like that. That's the same gospel Jesus preached, the gospel of repentance.

Mark 1:14-15 "After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. "The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!"

In the scripture below Jesus is heard saying I came to call the sinners to repentance.

Luke 5:32 “I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.”

The whole idea of repentance is so we can change our way of living. Repentance is saying I no longer want to live unrighteous and unholy but now I want to follow Christ. With repentance comes salvation. Salvation is Jesus saving us from our sins so we can be made holy and righteous before God. Once that happens, then we start living righteously and holy before God, we do not return to the old way of life. Let's read our last scripture. John says start living and doing works that match your repentance. Let your works match the fact that you have repented. Bear fruit that match your repentance.

Luke 3:8 “Bear fruits that are deserving and consistent with [your] repentance [that is, conduct worthy of a heart changed, a heart abhorring sin]. And do not begin to say to yourselves, We have Abraham as our father; for I tell you that God is able from these stones to raise up descendants for Abraham.”



DEVOTION 07

THE HEART AND THE MIND

“I the Lord search the heart and examine the mind, to reward each person according to their conduct, according to what their deeds deserve.”

Jeremiah 17:10

From Makado Vespers:

What is the heart the bible always talks about? So many instances the heart is mentioned in the bible, God saying I want a pure heart. Is it the heart that pumps blood? If not, then what is this heart? Can we see it or touch it?

In the Old Testament, the Hebrew word "**lev**" or "**leb**" (לֵב or לֵב) is often translated as "**heart**." However, in ancient Hebrew culture, the "**heart**" was considered the seat of thoughts, emotions, and intentions, which is more closely related to the concept of the "**mind**" in modern Western thought.

In the New Testament, the Greek word "**kardia**" (καρδία) is also translated as "**heart**." However, in many cases, it's more accurately translated as "**mind**" or "**inner being**," reflecting the idea of thoughts, intentions, and emotions.

When the Bible talks about the heart, it's talking about the mind. Having a "**pure heart**," is indeed having a pure mind, intentions, and thoughts. When David says create in me a pure heart, so that translates to create in me a pure mind.

Psalms 51:10 “Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.”

Or when David says thy word have I hid in my heart, in other words it's thy word have I hid in my mind.

Psalms 119:11 “Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.”

And this now makes sense. Because we always cry and say God clean my heart. What exactly is the heart we are referring to? It's our minds, our conscience, our thinking which have our intentions, memory, decision making and all things the mind carries. When David says thy word I hid in my heart, it's hiding the word in our minds. How do we do so? By constant meditation on the word. We meditate on the word with our minds.

Joshua 1:8 “This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.”

Then Paul says let the word of God dwell in you richly. Where is this word dwelling, it's in our minds because we read it and store it in our memory and conscience.

Colossians 3:16 “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.”

So the word comes and dwells in our hearts, the word comes and dwells in our minds. We can even relate this to the parable of the sower Jesus.

Matthew 13:19 “When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in their heart. This is the seed sown along the path.”

In the parable above, the word is preached. It says "and does not understand it" then says "the evil one snatches away what was sown in their heart." So the word heart is mentioned, and the heart here is failing to understand the word. Which body organ has the duty of understanding, it's the mind. So the heart is the mind. Jeremiah then brings the heart and the mind together in one place in the scripture below.

Jeremiah 17:10 “I the Lord search the heart and examine the mind, to reward each person according to their conduct, according to what their deeds deserve.”

Even Jesus brings the heart and the mind together. The heart and the mind are closely related.

Matthew 22:37 “Jesus replied: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’

We can now easily understand what Solomon meant on the verse below.

Proverbs 23:7 (NKJV) "For as he thinks in his heart, so is he. “Eat and drink!” he says to you, But his heart is not with you.”

Solomon says as he thinks in his heart. Can the heart think, what really does the thinking, it's the mind. So we can even understand too that when he said guard your heart above all, he meant guard your mind above all.

Proverbs 4:23 “Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.”

And when Jesus was saying your hearts are corrupt, it's the mind that is corrupt. He goes on to list the things that come from our minds which defile us.

Matthew 15:18-20 “But the things that come out of a person’s mouth come from the heart, and these defile them.”

[19]For out of the heart come evil thoughts—murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander.

[20]These are what defile a person; but eating with unwashed hands does not defile them.”

Out of our minds come evil thoughts, theft, false testimony and adultery. So we need to have a clean heart. A clean heart is a pure mind. That was the mind that was in Christ.

Philippians 2:5 “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:”

It wasn't corrupt in any way but thought only of good things. That's a clean heart, it's a pure mind.

Philippians 4:8 "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."



DEVOTION 08

SALVATION

“Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.” Acts 4:12

From Makado Vespers:

I love so much talking about salvation; simply because it reminds me that it's not but our own effort that we are saved. It's not my own righteousness I stand in. There is a lamb who was slain and His blood still has power to cleanse us from our sin and give us peace with God.

Romans 5:1 “Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,”

We have peace with God, not because we are too good, we are too obedient, we are too righteous, we pray too much or we read the word too much. Our peace with God isn't determined by anything we have done or can ever do. Nothing from our side contributes to us attaining peace with God. We can't even pay for it. But we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through His suffering and death, we attained peace with God. Not because of our own suffering, but that of Christ.

Acts 4:12 “Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.”

Salvation is found in no one else and in nothing else. There is no other place we can find salvation. There is no other name given to us by which we should be saved, except the name of Jesus. Jesus said He is the only person who can save you.

John 10:9 “I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. They will come in and go out, and find pasture.”

Jesus said He is the gate, whoever enters through me will be saved. That means we find our salvation in Christ. I want to show you that Jesus is the only way we can be saved.

John 14:6 “Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”

In the scripture above (John 10:9) Jesus said I am the door. Now He is making it clear that He is the only door. He is the only way we can be saved. And the whole saints in heaven agreed that Salvation belongs to the Lord and to the Lamb, definitely not to us.

Revelation 7:9-10 “After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice: “Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.”

Salvation belongs to God and to the Lamb. They have the salvation and are willing to save us. Now I want to show you that this salvation holds even till now. If you come to Him, you will be saved. If you are walking with Him and fail or fall, He still saves you from that and you can continue walking.

I will divide these aspects into three. First is Initial Salvation that is when we first receive salvation when we put our faith in Jesus. The second is the Ongoing Salvation. Under this, as we walk with God, He continues to save us from our sins and shortcomings. Last is the Eternal Salvation where our salvation is secure in Christ, and we are kept safe in His loving hands forever. I will provide scripture for ongoing salvation because I think that's the one that mainly affects us.

1 John 1:9 “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”

The scripture above is in the present tense. That means it applies to the present moment. In the original Greek text, 1 John 1:9 is in the present tense. Let's break it down.

"If we confess (present tense: ὁμολογοῦμεν, homologoumen) our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive (future tense: ἀφῆσαι, aphēsai) us our sins and purify (future tense: καθάρισι, katharizē) us from all unrighteousness." - 1 John 1:9 (ESV)

The present tense of "confess" (ὁμολογοῦμεν) indicates an ongoing, continuous action. This means that as we continually confess our sins, God continually forgives and purifies us. This present tense emphasizes the importance of ongoing repentance and confession in our walk with God. Lastly let's define what salvation is to make sure you won't miss anything. Please go through each scripture individually.

Salvation refers to the deliverance from the consequences of sin and its effects, which include:

Spiritual death: Separation from God (Ephesians 2:1-3, Romans 6:23).

Sin's penalty: Eternal punishment and judgment (Matthew 25:46, Revelation 20:15).

Sin's power: Bondage to sin and its destructive nature (Romans 6:17-18, 2 Peter 2:19).

Salvation encompasses or is made up of:

Justification: Being declared righteous before God through faith in Jesus Christ (Romans 3:24-25, 5:1). **Sanctification:** Being set apart for God's purposes and progressively transformed into Christ's image (1 Corinthians 1:30, 2 Corinthians 3:18).

Redemption: Being rescued from sin's slavery and redeemed by Jesus' blood (Galatians 3:13, Ephesians 1:7).

Eternal life: Receiving the gift of eternal life through Jesus Christ, which begins at the moment of salvation and continues forever (John 3:16, 1 John 5:13).

Let me close with this scripture again. Salvation belongs to our God and to the lamb. Salvation is a free gift God gives us. Remember the three aspects of salvation: initial salvation, ongoing salvation and eternal salvation.

Revelation 7:9-10 “After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice: “Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.”



DEVOTION 09

TRUE BEAUTY

It is not fancy hair, gold jewellery, or fine clothes that should make you beautiful. No, your beauty should come from inside you—the beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit. That beauty will never disappear. It is worth very much to God. 1 Peter 3:3-4(ERV)

From Makado Vespers:

In the world we live in today, beauty is something that has been prioritised and allow me to say extremely exaggerated. The main summary of many social media platforms is beautiful faces and fine hair and clothes and body shapes. It's easy for someone who is more beautiful to have high self-esteem and for someone who is less beautiful to have low self-esteem.

There are other people who really hate the way they look. They lost that confidence in how they look and they no longer prioritise their appearance. They blame themselves and their parents for being less beautiful. The world we live in today is really unfair towards such people. Some are discriminated and bullied due to how they look, especially girls. But what does God say about the way we look.

Psalm 139:14 “I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.”

God says you are fearfully and wonderfully made. The way you already are, God wonderfully made you. Look at the things you have, you have eyebrows. You have nice hair. You have a skin. You have teeth. In the sight of God, you are beautiful. So don't care and consider what other people say. Don't care and consider anything you might think like is a mistake, say everything about me is nice.

God wants us to be bold. He wants us to be confident. He wants us to be bold like a lion. And part of our boldness has to be about the way we look.

Proverbs 28:1 “The wicked flee when no man pursueth: but the righteous are bold as a lion.”

Why do we have to be bold about the way we look, because we have to know that God is pleased by it? After God created everything, He looked down from heaven and He was pleased. You are part of His creation, when He looked down from heaven and saw you, He was pleased.

Genesis 1:31 (ERV) “God looked at everything he had made. And he saw that everything was very good. There was evening, and then there was morning. This was the sixth day.”

God saw everything was good. You are His creation and you fall under that. Start falling in love yourself and who you are. Many people offend other people simply by how they look. The truth is, we have to accept our flaws, even the bad and negative ones. The moment we accept our flaws, no one then will be able to use our own flaws to hurt us. Now let's talk about what true beauty is.

1 Peter 3:3-8 (ERV) “It is not fancy hair, gold jewellery, or fine clothes that should make you beautiful. No, your beauty should come from inside you—the beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit. That beauty will never disappear. It is worth very much to God. It was the same with the holy women who lived long ago and followed God. They made themselves beautiful in that same way. They were willing to serve their husbands. I am talking about women like Sarah. She obeyed Abraham, her husband, and called him her master. And you women are true children of Sarah if you always do what is right and are not afraid. In the same way, you husbands should live with your wives in an understanding way, since they are weaker than you. You should show them respect, because God gives them the same blessing he gives you—the grace of true life. Do this so that nothing will stop your prayers from being heard. So all of you should live together in peace. Try to understand each other. Love each other like brothers and sisters. Be kind and humble.”

Peter then says true beauty is not fancy hairs. People spend on hair, making themselves look attractive and nice. Peter says that's not true beauty. If you are here buying hair so you can make yourself beautiful, it's nice being presentable but that's not where beauty resides.

Peter goes in to say or in gold jewellery. Beauty isn't in our jewellery, our necklaces, watches, earrings and rings. Of course we put that to look presentable and nice but that's not where beauty lies in. Our jewellery and make-up don't portray how beautiful we are.

Another thing Peter mentions is fine clothes. People wear clothes, just to market themselves by dressing. Other go to the extent of making the clothes short, like so short thinking by so I become more beautiful. I'm not saying wearing fancy clothes and nice clothes is unholy, it is okay because you are simply making yourself attractive. But our beauty does not reside from there. If you read this same scripture in the Message Bible it says what matters is not your outer appearance.

"1 Peter 3:3 (MSG) What matters is not your outer appearance—the styling of your hair, the jewellery you wear, the cut of your clothes—"

That's means your physical appearance contributes nothing to your beauty. Our outer appearance doesn't matter.

But where did Peter say beauty comes from, he said your beauty should come from inside you. He goes on to say the beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit. Now that's true beauty.

What's the state of our hearts, what's the state of our spirits? Are we gentle at heart? Do we have quiet and calm spirits or we are just quarrelsome? True beauty is being gentle. True beauty is being kind and compassionate, forgiving other people.

Ephesians 4:32 “Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.”

This kind of beauty, of being a gentle person, Peter says it's of great worth in the sight of God. True and lovely beauty is being slow to anger, true beauty is having no bitterness, no sadness and depression. Especially anger, even the bible says for anger does not promote the righteousness of God. Especially wives and other husbands too, even girls, or let me say everyone, let's put down anger. It makes us less beautiful.

James 1:19-20 “My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires.”

Finishing the scripture we read in Peter, it says this is how holy women of the past behaved. Their beauty was also that of a gentle and quiet spirit. They submitted under their husbands. Sarah obeyed Abraham. A beautiful person is one willing to obey you, not an ignorant person. There is no beauty in physical appearance but beauty is in obedience.

In the same way Peter says husbands treat your wives with respect. The guy driving an expensive car is not a handsome husband. The man with money and wealth is not a handsome husband. The handsome husband is considerate to his wife and treats her with respect.



DEVOTION 10

THE LORD'S MERCY – LEARNING FROM DANIEL

"O my God, incline thine ear, and hear; open thine eyes, and behold our desolations, and the city which is called by thy name: for we do not present our supplications before thee for our righteousnesses, but for thy great mercies." Daniel 9:18

From Makado Vespers:

Our God is a Merciful Lord. David writes about His Mercies and say they endure forever.

Psalm 136 (NKJV) "Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever. 2 Oh, give thanks to the God of gods! For His mercy endures forever. Oh, give thanks to the Lord of lords! For His mercy endures forever: Oh, give thanks to the God of heaven! For His mercy endures forever."

Jeremiah writes about the Lord's mercies and He says because of them, we are not consumed. The Lord's mercies are new every morning.

Lamentations 3:21-23 "This I recall to my mind, therefore have I hope. It is of the LORD'S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness."

What effect does His mercy have on us? Why is the mercy of God so important? How do we use them daily? Daniel explains that for us. Let's read when he talks about the Lord's mercies in his prayer.

Daniel 9:18 "O my God, incline thine ear, and hear; open thine eyes, and behold our desolations, and the city which is called by thy name: for we do not present our supplications before thee for our righteousnesses, but for thy great mercies."

Daniel makes it clear that we do not present our own supplications before God for our own righteousness, in other words we do not pray to God based on our own righteousness. We do not come to God simply because of how good we are. But because of the Lord's great mercies. We do not serve God, we don't worship, we don't share the word because we are so much good people. We don't join the praise and worship team because of our own righteousness. Nothing is based on us, but it's all based on the Lord's mercies. We pray simply because the Lord is merciful. It's not our own righteousness but his great mercies we do everything to God basing on.

I want to show you how righteous the person who was saying this was. I want to show you how righteous Daniel was, yet he says it's not my righteousness, it's not our righteousness but the Lord's mercies. Let's read first from the Kings James Version. It stresses out righteousness clearly.

Ezekiel 14:14, 16 “Though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness, saith the Lord GOD. Though these three men were in it, as I live, saith the Lord GOD, they shall deliver neither sons nor daughters; they only shall be delivered, but the land shall be desolate.”

The Kings James Version is difficult to understand, so let's quickly switch to the Easy to Read Version. I wanted you to see the word righteousness because the Easy to Read Version defines righteousness substituting it with goodness.

Ezekiel 14:14,16 “I would punish that country even if Noah, Daniel, and Job lived there. They could save their own lives by their goodness, but they could not save the whole country.” This is what the Lord God said. If Noah, Daniel, and Job lived there, those three men could save their own lives. But I promise by my own life that they could not save the lives of other people—not even their own sons and daughters! That evil country would be destroyed.” This is what the Lord God said.”

This is when God mentioned the righteousness of Daniel. He mentioned that of Job and Noah as well. He was saying this country is too wicked, even if Daniel and Noah and Job lived there, I wouldn't forgive the whole country because of them, but their own righteousness would save them.

My point is, even God said Daniel was righteous. In the sight of God, Daniel was righteous and even Daniel knew that. He would do things that do not disobey God such as not bowing down to other idols. Yet Daniel says it's not by my own righteousness but by the lord's mercy. So we stand in the mercies of the Lord and not our own righteousness.

Let me finish by giving you one practice Daniel did, which was common even unto Job too. Daniel prayed always. During the day he would pray thrice, he did that everyday. That's what contributed to his righteousness.

Daniel 6:10 “Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime.”

How often do you pray per day? Daniel did that everyday day. Yet he says it's not my own righteousness or works I stand in as I come before the lord, by I stand in His mercies. Learn to simply stand in the mercies of God, stand in the power of God and His grace available and not on anything you do.

Exercise that in things like, I'm going to heaven because Jesus died for me. Not because you were a pastor or you prayed and read the Bible everyday. You will pass because your victory comes from the lord. Not things like because I read all-night or because you attended all lectures and never skipped any.

This month you will be health simply because God will keep you health. Don't mention how you exercise and run everyday, don't talk about yourself but about what God does. Your marriage will last simply because God is in it. Stop telling us how you married someone with good personality and how you dated 5 years before marriage and that you now know each other so well. Your future is bright because God holds it in his hands, full stop. Stop telling us how you are educated and you have a degree and how it's easy for you to get employed.

Let's learn that from Daniel. He was a righteous man, but he didn't consider his own righteousness. He prayed everyday, something he knew. But in his prayer, he says I do not come with my own righteousness/works but I stand in your mercies. Let's not consider our efforts, our ability, what we can do, what we have done or anything regarding us. But completely let's stand and base on God, His power, His ability, His strength, His grace and His mercies.



DEVOTION 11

OUR GOD IS GOOD TO US

“Even to your old age and gray hairs I am he, I am he who will sustain you. I have made you and I will carry you; I will sustain you and I will rescue you.”

Isaiah 46:4

From Makado Vespers:

Our God is a good God. He is good all the time and He is good to us. Most importantly, He cares for us.

1 Peter 5:7 “Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.”

God cares for us. He cares about all that happens to us. He cares about what we eat, He cares about who we marry. He cares about our success and prosperity, especially how we attain it. He makes sure we are fed and we have clothes, food and shelter. Jesus told us, He said nothing happens to us without our father knowing about it.

Matthew 10:29-31 “Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground outside your Father’s care. And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. So don’t be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.”

Jesus says the sparrows we see, the birds, they are sold at a very low price. They are very insignificant, they are sold at a price of half a dollar. Yet not one of them falls down to the ground outside our father's care. Then Jesus says, we mustn't be afraid, we are worth more than sparrows to God.

Nothing is hidden before the sight of God. All our ways are known to Him. He knows all things. Our distress, our pain, our sickness, God knows it all. Jesus says God knows the accurate number of the hairs on our head. If one falls, God knows one is missing.

Our God has good plans for us. He intends only goodness for us. I love when Moses talks about it, He says the Lord has promised good to us.

Numbers 10:29 “Now Moses said to Hobab son of Reuel the Midianite, Moses’ father-in-law, “We are setting out for the place about which the Lord said, ‘I will give it to you.’ Come with us and we will treat you well, for the Lord has promised good things to Israel.”

The Israelites were in oppression, suffering and being bullied by the Egyptians, that's when God called Moses. It's because He had promised good to Israel. God has good intentions regarding you. Moses said we are going to the place God said I will give to you. That's God promising and wishing good over Israel.

Romans 8:31-32 “What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?”

God is for us. God plays and acts on our behalf. His plan is to promote us. If God is for us, what is sickness, unemployment and failure to stand against us? Paul said He freely gave us His Son. If God did that, how then will He not give us all these other things? He will give them to us. He will give us health, prosperity and success. God says I hold you with my own righteous right hand. He says even to your old age, I will be sustaining you.

Isaiah 46:4 “Even to your old age and gray hairs I am he, I am he who will sustain you. I have made you and I will carry you; I will sustain you and I will rescue you.”

God is our dwelling place. He is our safe refuge. We run to Him and hide. He covers us by His feathers. He protects us. Nothing can harm us. God is good to us. He fights our battles. He loves us so much. Nothing can separate us from Him.

Romans 8:35,37-39 “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Surely nothing can snatch us or take us away from God's hand.

John 10:27-29 “My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all ; no one can snatch them out of my Father’s hand.”

Let's finish by reading Psalm 91, the whole chapter. It shows us that our God is good to us.

Psalm 91:1-16

[1]Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty.

[2]I will say of the Lord, “He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.”

[3]Surely he will save you from the fowler’s snare and from the deadly pestilence.

[4]He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart.

[5]You will not fear the terror of night, nor the arrow that flies by day,

[6]nor the pestilence that stalks in the darkness, nor the plague that destroys at midday.

[7]A thousand may fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand, but it will not come near you.

[8]You will only observe with your eyes and see the punishment of the wicked.

[9]If you say, “The Lord is my refuge,” and you make the Most High your dwelling,

[10]no harm will overtake you, no disaster will come near your tent.

[11]For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways;

[12]they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.

[13]You will tread on the lion and the cobra; you will trample the great lion and the serpent.

[14]“Because he loves me,” says the Lord, “I will rescue him; I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name.

[15]He will call on me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honor him.

[16]With long life I will satisfy him and show him my salvation.”



DEVOTION 12

PRIESTS

“So now I tell you to obey my commands and keep my agreement. So if you do this, you will be my own special people. The whole world belongs to me, but I am choosing you to be my own special people. You will be a special nation—a kingdom of priests.’ Moses, you must tell the Israelites what I have said.”

Exodus 19:5-6 (ERV)

From Makado Vespers:

Let's explore one thing God calls us to be. That's one purpose God gives us simply because we believe in His name. If we are children of God as John says:

John 1:12 “Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—”

By believing in God, we become children of God. By being children of God, we are God's priests.

Isaiah 61:6 “And you will be called priests of the Lord, you will be named ministers of our God. You will feed on the wealth of nations, and in their riches you will boast.”

We are priests of the Lord. That's who we are called. We are named ministers of the Lord. Let's look at responsibilities or duties that come with our office of priesthood. They are obligations we are to fulfil.

Revelation 1:5-6 “and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father—to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen.”

The verse I want is verse six specifically; but I couldn't skip verse five for it mentions beautiful things about Christ. It says Jesus is the faithful witness. He is also the first born from the dead. Read Colossians one from verse fifteen, it explains how He is the first born from the dead. From Revelations, verse five goes on to say He is the ruler of the kings of earth. That means Christ has the greater and overall power and reign. In all physical and spiritual power, Christ is the greatest. It then says He loves us and He freed us from our sins by His blood.

Let's go to verse six that mentions about priests. It says He made us priests. So we are priests before God because Christ made us priests. The first role of our priesthood we get it here, to serve our God and Father. As priests, how has Christ enabled us to serve our God and Father. Let's go to Luke, He explains that.

Luke 1:69,74-75 “He has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David to rescue us from the hand of our enemies, and to enable us to serve him without fear in holiness and righteousness before him all our days.”

Zechariah says Christ is the horn of salvation that was raised for us. He said he rescues us from our enemies. Stress is our enemy, sickness is our enemy. Sadness and depression is our enemy. Jesus rescues us from that.

Jesus also enabled us to serve God without fear. We are not afraid of anything when serving God. Christ enables us to serve without fear. We are not afraid of evil spirits or any demons for Christ has all the power and He gave it to us. That's Him enabling us to serve without fear. We are not afraid of what people might say to us, we are not afraid of the false rumours people might spread. We are not afraid of being discriminated and considered insignificant. Christ made us priests and enabled us to serve God without fear of anything.

Christ enabled us to serve God in righteousness and holiness all our days. That's means we come before God not as sinful priests but as holy priests. I will send these two scriptures, they will explain this point of righteousness for you.

2 Corinthians 5:21 “God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”

Philippians 3:9 “and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith.”

Let's go to the second scripture where we can see this same obligation we are required to do as God's priests.

Revelation 5:10 “You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth.”

Our role of serving God returned, that means we really have to serve God. As a priest, find a way to serve God via. Sing a song, write a book, create a tiktok account for sharing the word, pray everyday and worship. Read the word, find a way to serve Him. God says He will reward those who serve Him.

John 12:26 “Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me.”

Another role we have is to declare His praises.

1 Peter 2:9 “But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.”

We are to declare the praises of God. That's the other role we have. Let's move to the next one. We are to be priests of God to the whole world, even to those who do not know God. That was God's original idea for the Israel tribe. He wanted it to all be a nation of priests before the whole earth. That means they were to declare the goodness of God even to the Philistines, the Babylonians and every tribe that didn't worship God. Let's read when God initially made the whole tribe of Israel priests to all tribes on the planet in that time.

Exodus 19:5-6 (ERV) “So now I tell you to obey my commands and keep my agreement. So if you do this, you will be my own special people. The whole world belongs to me, but I am choosing you to be my own special people. You will be a special nation—a kingdom of priests.’ Moses, you must tell the Israelites what I have said.”

This task even continued when Jesus came, but He introduced it differently by saying let your light shine before the world. That's being a priest, letting your light shine.

Matthew 5:16 “In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.”

How do we let our light shine, by producing works that keep up or go along with our repentance.

Luke 3:8 “Produce fruit in keeping His with repentance. And do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ For I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham.”

Our last role as priests, we will reign with God as priests forever.

Revelation 20:6 “Blessed and holy are those who share in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years.”



DEVOTION 13

FINDING FAVOUR WITH GOD

“If you are pleased with me, teach me your ways so I may know you and continue to find favor with you. Remember that this nation is your people.”

Exodus 33:13

From Makado Vespers:

First of all we have to remember that God doesn't change. He is Alpha and Omega, the same yesterday, today and forever. He doesn't change.

Malachi 3:6 “I the Lord do not change. So you, the descendants of Jacob, are not destroyed. If God doesn't change, so does His words, they never change too.”

Psalms 89:34 “My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips.”

Now we know that God doesn't change and His words too do not change. Let's read now His words.

Isaiah 61:8 “For I, the Lord, love justice; I hate robbery and wrongdoing. In my faithfulness I will reward my people and make an everlasting covenant with them.”

God says He loves justice. He also says He hates wrongdoing. That's God's word which does not change. He loves justice and hates wrong doing. This goes along with what He says in Isaiah 1.

Isaiah 1:17 “Learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed. Take up the cause of the fatherless; plead the case of the widow.”

God wants us to learn to do what is right. He wants us to seek justice. Paul explains it better. Let's read from Timothy.

1 Timothy 6:11 “But you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness.”

Paul says we must pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness. God wants us to pursue righteous. Here is a little secret regarding walking with God. Let's read the scripture first from the New International Version.

Exodus 19:5-6 “Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’ These are the words you are to speak to the Israelites.”

I want you to first read the part that says although the whole earth is mine. That means we all belong to God. We are His people, like everyone who walks on earth belongs to God. But God says if you obey me, out of the nations you will be my treasured possession.

That means we are all God's people created by Him. But we make ourselves different from others by obeying God. We become His treasured possession. Verse six says you become priests and a holy nation.

Now let's talk about finding favour with God. How do we find favour with God.

Exodus 33:13 “If you are pleased with me, teach me your ways so I may know you and continue to find favor with you. Remember that this nation is your people.”

Moses says if God is pleased with me, let God teach me His ways. If God is pleased with you, He will teach you His ways. He will teach you to do right, to seek justice and stop all wrongdoing. He will teach you how to pursue righteousness. God will teach you His ways if He is pleased with you. And God's way is righteousness.

If God teaches you His ways, then you know Him and continue to find favour with Him. The key to finding favour with God is in knowing His ways

Proverbs 3:3-4 “Let love and faithfulness never leave you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart. Then you will win favor and a good name in the sight of God and man.”

If you walk in love and you are faithful to God, you will win and attract His favour.

Psalms 84:11 “For the Lord God is a sun and shield; the Lord bestows favor and honor; no good thing does he withhold from those whose walk is blameless.”

The Lord bestows favour on those whose walk is blameless. The Lord releases favour on the righteous.



DEVOTION 14

WHEN GOD INTERVENES

“That night the angel of the Lord went out and put to death a hundred and eighty-five thousand in the Assyrian camp. When the people got up the next morning—there were all the dead bodies!” 2 Kings 19:35

From Makado Vespers:

When God comes through in your situation, it's very different from when men come through in your situation. As people we find solutions to our problems and challenges, when God creates a solution for you, it's very different from when people find solutions. When God lifts you up in your life, it's very different from when you try to lift yourself up or when other people try to lift you up. David makes it clear that God is the lifter of my head.

Psalms 3:3 “But thou, O LORD, art a shield for me; my glory, and the lifter up of mine head.”

When God lifts you up, like David out of nowhere a priest will come to anoint you as king. When God lifts you up like Joseph in the prison when you think you are lost and forsaken and no one knows about you, in just one day you will be ruler of a foreign country (Egypt). David recognises that and says God is the lifter of mine head.

When we try to lift ourselves up through connections and corruption and links, it's very different from when God lifts us up by His own power. God to Zerubbabel tells him that it's not by your own power, it's not by your human effort but God says it's by my spirit.

Zechariah 4:6-7 “So he said to me, “This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel: ‘Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,’ says the Lord Almighty. “What are you, mighty mountain? Before Zerubbabel you will become level ground. Then he will bring out the capstone to shouts of ‘God bless it! God bless it!’ ”

When God does it, it's different from when people do it. There was a mountain before Zerubbabel and God says it will become a plain.

God then says I want you to know that it's not done by might nor by power. In other words it's not done by human effort but by my spirit God says. When God intervenes and does it, it's by His own strength and God's own power and ability, not our own. It will be different from when we do it.

When God brings us a solution, the process is supernatural in its occurrence and very different from how man do it. One simple way is how we earn money. We work so hard to earn a living. We even go to the extent of being corrupt so we can hold money in our pockets. Let's see how Jesus got money when he wanted to pay his tax.

Matthew 17:27 “But so that we may not cause offense, go to the lake and throw out your line. Take the first fish you catch; open its mouth and you will find a four-drachma coin. Take it and give it to them for my tax and yours.”

Jesus wanted money, and simply he commanded Peter to go and fetch it from a fish. Our ways and God's ways really are different. When God intervenes and solves problems for us, it's very different from our own efforts to solve our problems. We find money in a fish. When Peter discovered this he said get away from me for I am a sinner. All night he tried fishing and caught nothing. Jesus in just one instant provides many that made the boat sink.

Luke 5:4-9 “When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, “Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch.” Simon answered, “Master, we’ve worked hard all night and haven’t caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets.” When they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break. So they signaled their partners in the other boat to come and help them, and they came and filled both boats so full that they began to sink. When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus’ knees and said, “Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!” For he and all his companions were astonished at the catch of fish they had taken,”

When God Intervenes, it's different from our efforts. All night they tried fishing and caught nothing. When Jesus commanded them to fish at the exact same spot they tried, they caught so many. If you are a fisherman, you know fishing starts around evening, through the night till early morning, and not in broad midday. But in broad midday God could do it. They were astonished at what they saw. God can do it different from how we do it. His solutions are different from ours. Peter said go away from me after he witnessed that.

God can promote us different from how we try to promote ourselves. God can make us successful different from our own means and efforts of trying to prosper ourselves. Abraham knew that and he said don't give me any wealth, you will think you are the reason I became rich. He said I will wait for my God, He is the one to make me successful for He alone is the lifter of mine head (as David describes it).

Genesis 14:21-24 “The king of Sodom said to Abram, “Give me the people and keep the goods for yourself.” But Abram said to the king of Sodom, “With raised hand I have sworn an oath to the Lord, God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth, that I will accept nothing belonging to you, not even a thread or the strap of a sandal, so that you will never be able to say, ‘I made Abram rich.’ I will accept nothing but what my men have eaten and the share that belongs to the men who went with me—to Aner, Eshkol and Mamre. Let them have their share.”

2 Kings 19:35 “That night the angel of the Lord went out and put to death a hundred and eighty-five thousand in the Assyrian camp. When the people got up the next morning—there were all the dead bodies!”

Look at what happened, an angel descended and killed all their enemies. The Israelites woke up only to see dead bodies. I'm saying God can come through for you in a way that you can really see and recognise that this was God. Not trying to think and assume that this was God's doing. God can come through for you and help you in a supernatural way you never imagined that you can fail to explain who did this. He part the red sea, Jesus walked on water, Jesus fed the five thousand. God can do it. Never doubt the power of God.

Daniel was thrown into the lion's den. Shadrach, Meshack and Abednego walked in fire. Elijah's food was brought to him by birds. Fire burnt down from heaven and destroyed the alters of Baal.

God can intervene. He can give you a peaceful and secure job. He can give you a wife. He can make you pass. God can do it. He is the Maker of all things and in Him alone does all the power dwell. But what's the secret of God operating like that in us.

Draw closer to God and He will draw closer to you. You can only experience His supernatural when you exist in Him. Seek God with a true heart. Be willing to put down your sin and seek God with all your heart. God sees your heart. Devote everything to God. Call to Him for help. He will come through for you. Get close to God.

James 4:8-10 “Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.”

Come near to God and He will come near to you. As God comes near to you, He brings your success with Him. He brings your joy with him. He brings your health and your career with Him. Be honest before God and seek Him with a true heart. Just make the Lord your dwelling place and stay in Him. The secret is to set your love upon Him.

Psalms 91:14-16 (AMP) “Because he has set his love upon Me, therefore will I deliver him; I will set him on high, because he knows and understands My name [has a personal knowledge of My mercy, love, and kindness—trusts and relies on Me, knowing I will never forsake him, no, never]. He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honor him. With long life will I satisfy him and show him My salvation.”



DEVOTION 15

CHOOSE HAPPINESS EVERYDAY

“Nehemiah said, “Go and enjoy choice food and sweet drinks, and send some to those who have nothing prepared. This day is holy to our Lord. Do not grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.” Nehemiah 8:10

From Makado Vespers:

Happiness is a choice. It's a choice we make whether to be happy or upset. We chose and decide whether an event or circumstance makes us happy or sad. Let's say you are holding a plate and it falls by mistake and breaks. Here are two reactions to that. You can choose to be sad about it. That will change your mood and you become upset. You can literally become upset the whole day about the plate if you allow that to persist. Or you can choose to simply ignore the event, sweep the broken pieces away and tell yourself that you will buy another one.

That's two reactions, being happy or being sad. We decide how we react to things. Each moment you are sad or unhappy because something happened, do you know that you can choose being grateful and happy about it. Your parent/child dies and it leaves you in pain. If you are not careful, you can live in depression for over 5 years. But you can decide to be grateful to God for the time you spent together and accept that he/she died because it was according to God's time. Instead of mourning, you can choose to celebrate the time you spent together and that will give you happiness. It's a choice you would have made to be happy, it's a different reaction.

I want you to realise that for all moments you are sad and depressed, you can choose to brush that away and start being happy, thus maintaining joy. That also means happiness is free. Happiness is always available. It's always there. We choose to be happy, and we choose to be sad. Let's hear what Jesus says about the day.

Matthew 6:34 “So do not worry or be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will have worries and anxieties of its own. Sufficient for each day is its own trouble.”

Jesus says each day has its own trouble. It says each day has worries and anxieties of it's own. That means there are situations, issues and negatives moments that come to us everyday. Let's say there is no electricity and you failed to charge your phone and it's on low battery since morning. That can be a reason someone would be upset the whole day. Let's say the food has no salt or too much salt. That can be a reason someone would be upset the whole day. Let's say you obtain a fail in your exam or the driver delays you because his driving was slow. These are the troubles each day has. But what does the bible say.

Psalms 30:5 “For His anger is but for a moment, but His favor is for a lifetime or in His favor is life. Weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning.”

I want the part that says joy comes in the morning. So that means all issues that happened yesterday have to stay in yesterday. Before yesterday ends, forgive and forget all the pains it brought. Let go of the sadness, depression, guilty and regret yesterday brought. Do not carry it over to the next day.

In the next day, early in the morning before nothing else comes, joy comes. Allow joy to come to you every morning. Allowing joy to come means you are forgiving and forgetting the problems and issues of yesterday. It means you are not carrying them over to the new day. It means you are choosing to walk in love in the new day. Of course the new day will have it's own trouble and problems too, but we don't carry them on to the next day. So we refill our joy and correct our tamper every morning.

Psalms 118:24 “This is the day which the LORD hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.”

That scripture tells us that in a day God has made, we are supposed to rejoice and be glad in it. Everyday is a day God has made. You are not allowed to be sad, to be angry, to be depressed or to feel bitter in a day the Lord has made. You only are to rejoice and be glad in it. It doesn't matter your husband is cheating on you, it doesn't matter you are unemployed. It doesn't matter you got rejected in an interview. It doesn't matter you are sick but simply because it's a day God has made, you are to rejoice and be glad in it. Then Paul says rejoice always.

Philippians 4:4 “Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!”

Paul says we are to rejoice always. That means we are to be happy all the time. That means we are not to allow ourselves to be sad or depressed or unhappy at any instance but always we are to rejoice. Always we are to feel happy. Why do you allow yourself to be angry or upset about something, of course Jesus said everyday has it's own trouble but don't allow that trouble to affect your happiness. Simply be happy. Choose to rejoice always. Let your happiness be undisturbed by anything. Let your peace be unaffected by any circumstance, whether funeral news or any negative news. Learn to maintain joy. Rejoice always.

Nehemiah 8:10 “Nehemiah said, “Go and enjoy choice food and sweet drinks, and send some to those who have nothing prepared. This day is holy to our Lord. Do not grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.”

The scripture above says this day is holy to our God. So is today and any other day, it's a holy day because God made it. That's what makes it holy. Everyday is a holy day. We are to enjoy nice food and sweet drinks everyday because it's a holy day. We are not supposed to grieve any day. Another version says sorrow not for the joy of the Lord is your strength.

My message for you is that, rejoice always. Yes, everyday has it's own trouble as Jesus said but we are supposed to always rejoice. That means never allow sadness or any form of depression or anger to come near you. Don't allow yourself to feel sadness. Let's maintain our joy through all seasons and circumstances. Grieve not everyday, sorrow not during the course of each day for the joy of the Lord is your strength.

LETS REJOICE ALWAYS REMEMBERING THAT OUR STRENGTH IS OF YAHWEH!



DEVOTION 16

DO YOU KNOW?

‘For in him we live and move and have our being.’ As some of your own poets have said, ‘We are his offspring.’ Acts 17:28

From Makado Vespers:

Do you know that it's no longer you who lives, but now Jesus lives in you? Yes, now Jesus lives in you. Christ living in you, do you know that it means you are dead as an individual and now Jesus Christ is the one alive in you? He takes over all things. He is now the person present and alive in you, not you yourself.

Philippians 1:21 “For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.”

To live is Christ. That means Christ is the one who enables us to live. How is this possible? That means we entirely depend on Christ for all things that pertains to life. There is no single aspect of our lives we consider Christ not involved. All areas depend on Christ because to live is Christ.

In our careers, at our workplaces, we still depend on Christ and His power. In our marriages, we still need Christ. In our finances, we still need Christ. In our families, we need Christ to raise our children. We need Christ even in our education and in our health as well. Because to live is Christ. All things depend on Christ.

To live is Christ means we do not depend on ourselves to live but we depend on Christ hence to live is Christ. It means we don't depend on our own strength, but the strength of Christ. We don't depend on our own ability, to pass, to be health, to succeed and to have health or safe marriages and relationships, we don't depend on our ability but on the ability of Christ.

We do no depend on our own capability but that of Christ. We do no rely on our own connections but we are completely dependant on Christ for us to live, it's all because of Christ and nothing about us. No longer do we live but now to live is Christ. We live in Christ.

Acts 17:28 ‘For in him we live and move and have our being.’ As some of your own poets have said, ‘We are his offspring.’

In Christ we live. That means Christ is the one who enables us to live. He enables us to face everyday. He gives us strength to face tomorrow. In Christ we also move. The walking we do everyday, the running and all things, we move in Christ. In Christ we also have our being. That now refers to our appearance, our body shape and body parts, our faces and how they look like. We have our being in Christ.

Philippians 4:13 “I can do all this through him who gives me strength.”

We now can do all things through Christ. That means Christ is the force enabling us to do all things. Hence it's His power, His authority, His ability and His strength we now rely on and not our own. This means to live now is Christ so it's no longer us who lives, now Jesus lives in us.

John 15:5 “I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.”

Jesus says apart from me, there is nothing you can do. That means if you want success, you achieve it with Christ. If you want prosperity, peace, comfort and joy, you do that with and in Christ. Apart from Him, there is nothing you can do. If you want a marriage, a wedding, a job, a good family, a car or a house, you achieve that in Christ. Without Him, there is nothing you can do.

Galatians 2:20 “I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”

Paul says we no longer live but now Christ lives in us. Don't be afraid of how the next 20 years of your life are going to be like. Just know that it's no longer you living but Christ. Don't worry, don't fear, no longer do we live but now Christ lives in us. It's Christ who is in charge. It's Jesus who is in control. The moment we believed, Jesus took the lead, He is the Lord over us and monitors all things. The moment we believed, we became “born of God” as John says in chapter one. God's will for our lives was activated and immediately He took over.

Our lives are now hidden in Christ.

Colossians 3:3 “For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.”

Our lives are now hidden in Christ. That means poverty can no longer locate us. Death, sickness, depression, and all the works of the enemy can no longer locate us simply because our lives are now hidden in Christ. God's power is at work in us. We no longer live, now Jesus lives in us.

Philippians 2:13 “[Not in your own strength] for it is God Who is all the while effectually at work in you [energizing and creating in you the power and desire], both to will and to work for His good pleasure and satisfaction and delight.”



DEVOTION 17

TROUBLE IS GUARANTEED

“strengthening the disciples and encouraging them to remain true to the faith. “We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God,” they said.” Acts 14:22

From Makado Vespers:

The world is really a tough place to live in sometimes. We experience a lot of challenges sometimes. For some, it's the death of breadwinners, others it's bills they can't afford to pay. For some it's relationships and marriages that are failing to work. For others it's hatred they receive from their own family members. Others have spiritual battles they are fighting. If you look closely at it, there are just problems that surround everyone.

There is no place of perfect peace on earth. There is no single person who we can say, this person doesn't have any problem. Even billionaires commit suicide. Famous people and celebrities face hatred everyday on social media from the people who dislike them. Especially social media, many people have received a lot of pressure from there. To others who are very hardworking, it may seem like the hardwork isn't paying off. You struggle each day but do not see the result and benefit of your effort. What does Job say about this.

Job 14:1 “Mortals, born of woman, are of few days and full of trouble.”

Job says the days of man on earth are very few but full of trouble. So Job confirms that we really face trouble on earth. Our days are few but full of trouble. It explains why the water bill has to be paid, electricity has to be paid, school fees for children, failing academically at school, the car breaking down, the house getting burnt. It's because the days of man on earth are few but full of trouble. Let's hear what Luke writes in Acts.

Acts 14:22 “strengthening the disciples and encouraging them to remain true to the faith. “We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God,” they said.

Paul and Barnabas preached saying we must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God. That explains the many trouble that we face. It's the many hardships we experience, but don't worry, they come to test our faith, the end result is entering the kingdom of God. Let's celebrate, if you are having troubles celebrate. Know that you are on the correct path to the kingdom of God. So hardships are the way to the kingdom. If you are having them, rejoice and know you are on the correct route.

2 Timothy 3:12 “In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted,”

Before Paul wrote that, in the verses above he was saying you know about my persecutions and suffering. That's when we got to verse twelve where he said everyone who wants to live a holy life in Jesus will be persecuted. So don't worry, our holiness attract these problems to us. Our righteousness attract problems to us. Jesus even says in the world we will face trouble.

John 16:33 “I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”

Jesus said in this world you will have trouble. So ladies and gentlemen, for us as believers, trouble really is guaranteed. Don't worry, the bible says so, I showed you how trouble is guaranteed. But let's finish by remembering that Jesus knows our trouble, persecution and poverty.

Revelation 2:9-11 (AMP) “I know your affliction and distress and pressing trouble and your poverty—but you are rich! and how you are abused and reviled and slandered by those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. Fear nothing that you are about to suffer. [Dismiss your dread and your fears!] Behold, the devil is indeed about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested and proved and critically appraised, and for ten days you will have affliction. Be loyally faithful unto death [even if you must die for it], and I will give you the crown of life. He who is able to hear, let him listen to and heed what the Spirit says to the assemblies (churches). He who overcomes (is victorious) shall in no way be injured by the second death.”

Jesus says I know your troubles. He says I know your poverty and your persecutions. He says even more trouble is coming, you will be thrown into prisons; but be loyal even unto death. In the midst of trouble, do not curse God. Remain faithful and true to his word. Then will you receive a crown from him. Yes, you can't afford to meet all financial needs but do not give up on prayer and on God. Jesus says I know your troubles. If you hold on, do not commit suicide, keep praying and seeking Christ and if you are faithful even unto death, Jesus says I will give you my reward.

Revelation 22:12 “Behold, I am coming soon, and I shall bring My wages and rewards with Me, to repay and render to each one just what his own actions and his own work merit.”

Let's endure till the end. Let's stand firm till the end. Let's seek God everyday in spirit and in truth till the day we die. Let's endure these struggles till the day we die.

Matthew 24:13 “but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved.”



DEVOTION 18

PEACE

“to shine on those living in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the path of peace.” Luke 1:79

From Makado Vespers:

One thing is certain about God. He gives His children peace.

Psalm 29:11 “The Lord gives strength to his people; the Lord blesses his people with peace.”

The Lord gives strength to His people. When you feel like giving up, the Lord gives strength to His people. When you feel like quitting, when you feel like you can't carry the burdens anymore, the Lord gives strength. And He too blesses His people with peace. That means peace is a blessing that we receive from God. God gives His people peace.

Psalm 85:8 “I will listen to what God the Lord says; he promises peace to his people, his faithful servants— but let them not turn to folly.”

Not only does He give peace but He too promises peace. Come to God, you are promised of one thing - peace. God gives His children peace. Why do we find peace in God, because He is the God of Peace.

Romans 15:33 “The God of peace be with you all. Amen.”

He is the God of peace. And God is our peace. The Lord is my peace. The Lord is peace.

Judges 6:24 “So Gideon built an altar to the Lord there and called it The Lord Is Peace. To this day it stands in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.”

When storms come, when troubles come. When you have all sorts of shortages like food shortages, financial shortages or any kind of problem.

I want you to remember that the Lord is Peace. Call Him and tell Him that He is your peace. Read Micah 5:5, when war come, God will be our peace. Say to God, you are my peace. So is Jesus Christ. He too gives peace.

Luke 1:79 “to shine on those living in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the path of peace.”

Jesus guides our feet into the path of peace. Jesus leads us to His peace. He does that because He is the prince of peace.

Isaiah 9:6 “For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”

Jesus is the prince of peace. He is the king of peace. He does that through giving us peace. I want you to notice something about this peace. Let's read from John.

John 16:33 “I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”

In Jesus we are having peace. In the world we are having trouble but in Jesus we are having peace. That moment the world is persecuting us, that moment we are in hardships, we have access to peace and our peace is in Christ. These happen simultaneously.

The peace of God of course might be a state where we are free from problems and stress and worry and simply enjoying happiness. It's true, that's one meaning of peace. Even though that might be one definition, the other type of peace we get in Christ is one that is present even in our suffering.

John 14:27 “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.”

Jesus says peace, I leave with you. He says I give my peace to you. He says I do not give my peace as the world gives. In the world, you think you have peace when you are free from hardships, when you are not having any situation. But the peace of Christ doesn't wait for situations to pass, it's present even in situations. It's present even in trouble. Whilst you are being sent to prison after you were falsely accused, your heart will still be at peace. Now that's the peace of Christ.

Jesus says do not let your heart be troubled, and do not be afraid. Whilst you are surrounded by many problems, still don't let your heart be troubled but be at peace. That's the peace of Christ, it's always there. It's a permanent peace. It's unaffected by situations and trouble. The peace of Christ is undisturbed by anything. It's always there.

Ephesians 1:2 (AMP) “May grace (God's unmerited favor) and spiritual peace [which means peace with God and harmony, unity, and undisturbedness] be yours from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.”

The Amplified Bible calls the peace in Ephesians 1:2 spiritual peace. That means it's peace in our spirits. Spiritual peace, that means it's coming from our spirits, it's not affected by the physical. In the physical you might be in lack but your spirit is at peace. That's the peace we find in Christ. I like when the Amplified Bible defined it as undisturbedness. In other words we remain undisturbed.

The peace we have in Christ, it's undisturbed by anything. Let's say your house got burnt, your car broke down. Still your peace must be undisturbed hence your peace remains. Let's say you accidentally make someone pregnant, maybe it was a mistake. The peace of Christ remains present and undisturbed, you don't take abortion pills but you know God has a reason and purpose for that child and God loves him/her. You don't stress figuring out how he/she will survive, don't commit suicide. Remain undisturbed. The peace of Christ is undisturbed. Hence it's a peace that transcends all understanding.

Philippians 4:7 “And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

To transcend means to go above, to exceed or to go beyond. The peace of Christ transcends all understanding. It's crazy how you remain at peace in the face of trouble. But that's the peace we find in Christ. He says peace I give unto you. In the world we have trouble but in Christ we have perfect peace.

2 Thessalonians 3:16 “Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times and in every way. The Lord be with all of you.”

Paul says may the God of peace Himself. The Lord is our God of peace. He is our peace. Paul says may He give us peace at all times. All times means always. Even when you can't afford to buy a meal, when you can't afford to buy new clothes. In sickness and disease, may that peace be present. May He give you peace always and at all times and in every way.

Let's finish with a song. The song is called Peace in Christ performed by a 5 year old Claire Ryann Crosby and her dad. Let's read through the lyrics as we close. I only want the Chorus, it's the one which matches what we have been saying.

He gives us hope, when hope is gone
He gives us strength, when we can't go on
He gives us shelter in the storms of life
When there is no peace on earth, there is peace in Christ



DEVOTION 19

ALL TO HIM

“So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.”
1 Corinthians 10:31

From Makado Vespers:

Philippians 2:11 “and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

Jesus Christ is Lord. He is the Lord over all. For in Him where all things made.

John 1:3,10 “Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him.”

He is the Lord over all the universe because He made. He is the Lord over all plants, all animals, all creatures including human beings and angels because for us to be made it's because of Him. John said all things were made through Him and the world was made through Him. That means He is the Lord over us because He made us. When we got born again, we confessed that Jesus Christ is Lord.

Romans 10:9-10 “If you declare with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved.”

Being born again means we declared with our mouths that Jesus is Lord. It means in our hearts we believe that as well. Now, what does it mean that Jesus is Lord over us?

It means we now answer to Him. We now get instructions from Him because He is Lord. In other words we are no longer free or independent, we now answer to Jesus our Lord.

So when God says do not divorce your wife, keep being loyal to her and do not cheat on her, or to females when the Word of God says respect and submit under your husbands and don't cheat them, it's a command from the Lord that has to be obeyed.

Whether you like it or not, you have to do it simply because the Lord has spoken. It's no longer about how you feel or think and what you prefer but when the Lord says something, it's has to be done. When you say Jesus is Lord over you, it means you are willing to be obedient unto Him.

When you make Jesus your lord, the priority has changed. The goal now is to please Him and not to please the world. The life you start to live after that, it's a life all to Him. It's His glory you are now working towards, and not any glory.

2 Corinthians 5:9 “So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it.”

Let's understand it using the Amplified Bible Version.

2 Corinthians 5:9 “Therefore, whether we are at home [on earth away from Him] or away from home [and with Him], we are constantly ambitious and strive earnestly to be pleasing to Him.”

That means our new goal now is to please the Lord. Whether we are on earth or in heaven, we are to please God. We have to please God in everything that we do because He is our Lord.

Galatians 1:10 “Am I now trying to win the approval of human beings, or of God? Or am I trying to please people? If I were still trying to please people, I would not be a servant of Christ.”

We are no longer trying to win the approval of human beings but that of God. We are no longer trying to please people. If we were trying to please people, we wouldn't be servants of Christ, because pleasing people doesn't juxtapose that. We are now trying to please God folks, Jesus is our Lord and He is our main priority and the one we want to please, not people.

1 Thessalonians 2:4 “On the contrary, we speak as those approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel. We are not trying to please people but God, who tests our hearts.”

Let's speak, let's act, let's move and do all things as those approved by God. We are not trying to please people but God, who tests our hearts. We have to please the Lord in every way.

Colossians 1:10 “so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God,”

If we please God, he won't leave us alone.

John 8:29 “The one who sent me is with me; he has not left me alone, for I always do what pleases him.”

We are now living for God's glory and everything we do now must be for God's glory.

1 Peter 4:11 “If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.”

Peter doesn't clearly present the point. Paul makes it clear. He says whatever that you do, whether be it eating or drinking, do it all for the glory of God.

1 Corinthians 10:31 “So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.”



DEVOTION 20

STANDING IN CHRIST'S RIGHTEOUSNESS

“And that I may [actually] be found and known as in Him, not having any [self-achieved] righteousness that can be called my own, based on my obedience to the Law's demands (ritualistic uprightness and supposed right standing with God thus acquired), but possessing that [genuine righteousness] which comes through faith in Christ (the Anointed One), the [truly] right standing with God, which comes from God by [saving] faith.” Philippians 3:9 (AMP)

From Makado Vespers:

With our own efforts, can we really be righteous before God? As in 100% pure and holy before God, can we achieve that as human beings based on our own ability alone? Can we get to a point where we can say now we are perfect before the Lord and entirely right with Him; as in we have managed to attain righteousness on our own, we have completed all goodness and perfection here on earth? That means we never lie or steal or get jealousy and do no bad thing. Will there be a point in time we can say over the past ten years I never committed a single sin and into the next ten years I am sure I won't commit any sin? Can we alone achieve our own righteousness before God?

The answer to all questions above is NO! There will never be a point we can entirely be able to be holy and pure before God, achieving that through our own actions, words and effort. The bible says the moment we say we are able to obey all of God's laws alone by our own ability, in other words we are saying Jesus' death on the cross was in vain because alone we could accomplish what He died for. In other words we will be saying we do not need His death, alone as individuals we can manage to be holy before God.

Galatians 2:21 “I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing!”

If we can say righteousness can be gained through the law, that means achieving righteousness through our own efforts, then Christ died for nothing. That's why we have scriptures in the bible that say all have sinned and fell short of the glory of God.

Romans 3:23 “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,”

It says all have sinned. That means everyone really. No one is able to attain righteous by own efforts, works or actions. I have prepared a little case study for you. I want to show you how even the people God called righteous, who were used heavily by God, I want to show you how at some point in time they disobeyed God, even though they were walking with him.

Let's start with Moses. God says Moses is my righteous servant and I speak to him face to face.

Exodus 33:9,11 “As Moses went into the tent, the pillar of cloud would come down and stay at the entrance, while the Lord spoke with Moses. The Lord would speak to Moses face to face, as one speaks to a friend. Then Moses would return to the camp, but his young aide Joshua son of Nun did not leave the tent.”

But the reason Moses couldn't enter Canaan is because He disobeyed God. God said Moses simply speak to the rock and Moses stroke twice.

Numbers 20:8,11-12 “Take the staff, and you and your brother Aaron gather the assembly together. Speak to that rock before their eyes and it will pour out its water. You will bring water out of the rock for the community so they and their livestock can drink.” Then Moses raised his arm and struck the rock twice with his staff. Water gushed out, and the community and their livestock drank. But the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, “Because you did not trust in me enough to honor me as holy in the sight of the Israelites, you will not bring this community into the land I give them.”

Moses, no matter how close He was to God that they could speak face-to-face, Moses disobeyed God, after all he had been through with God. That means alone as individuals we really do not bring ourselves to complete righteousness before God. David another example. God says David is a man after my own heart.

Acts 13:22 “After removing Saul, he made David their king. God testified concerning him: ‘I have found David son of Jesse, a man after my own heart; he will do everything I want him to do.’

But David goes on to take Uriah's wife. Even Peter, after he was baptised by the holy ghost, he would stumble sometimes. In the scripture below he was being corrected by Paul.

Galatians 2:14 “When I saw that they were not acting in line with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas[Peter] in front of them all, “You are a Jew, yet you live like a Gentile and not like a Jew. How is it, then, that you force Gentiles to follow Jewish customs?”

It's clear that we can never attain righteousness alone by our own works. There is just somewhere we will disobey God. Even Moses, David and Peter, greatly used by God yet there was that moment they disobeyed. That explains the need of Christ. Jesus is there to complete us and allow us to stand in complete righteousness, His righteousness as our own before God.

Romans 3:21-22 (AMP) “But now the righteousness of God has been revealed independently and altogether apart from the Law, although actually it is attested by the Law and the Prophets, Namely, the righteousness of God which comes by believing with personal trust and confident reliance on Jesus Christ (the Messiah). [And it is meant] for all who believe. For there is no distinction,”

A new righteousness has been made known to us, one we get simply by believing in Christ. So we can never be complete in purity before God based on our own actions, hence Christ comes to complete us. That means for all moments we fail, Christ is there to remove that disobedience and bring us to perfection before God. He purifies us from all unrighteousness.

1 John 1:9 “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”

Our righteousness is hidden in Christ. That's where it's made complete, in Christ. Christ is able to save those who come to God. John said He purifies us from all unrighteousness. He does this by interceding for them.

Hebrews 7:25 “Therefore He is able also to save to the uttermost (completely, perfectly, finally, and for all time and eternity) those who come to God through Him, since He is always living to make petition to God and intercede with Him and intervene for them.”

Alone we really can't accomplish purity before God, hence the need for Christ. When you sin don't feel bad, know that Christ died for you. And I love when God says it in Deuteronomy. He says know that you are entering the promised land not because of your own righteousness.

Deuteronomy 9:4-6 “Do not say in your [mind and] heart, after the Lord your God has thrust them out from before you, It is because of my righteousness that the Lord has brought me in to possess this land—whereas it is because of the wickedness of these nations that the Lord is dispossessing them before you. Not for your righteousness or for the uprightness of your [minds and] hearts do you go to possess their land; but because of the wickedness of these nations the Lord your God is driving them out before you, and that He may fulfill the promise which the Lord swore to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Know therefore that the Lord your God does not give you this good land to possess because of your righteousness, for you are a hard and stubborn people.”

The bottom line and the summary is that, it's not us but Christ! It's not our own righteousness, we failed to please God. Therefore let's embrace this new righteousness that has been revealed to us, the one we obtain through believing in Christ.

Philippians 3:9 (AMP) “And that I may [actually] be found and known as in Him, not having any [self-achieved] righteousness that can be called my own, based on my obedience to the Law's demands (ritualistic uprightness and supposed right standing with God thus acquired), but possessing that [genuine righteousness] which comes through faith in Christ (the Anointed One), the [truly] right standing with God, which comes from God by [saving] faith.”



DEVOTION 21

THE VITAL TRUTH

“Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to your life?” Luke 12:25

From Makado Vespers:

Before we choose to be sad. Before we decide to be depressed, disappointed, irritated, upset, unsatisfied and unhappy about some things, there are just some things we never are supposed to be disappointed or sad about. So many things exist, things that never must be the reason to our unhappiness.

One is weather. You can't be upset that the sun is too hot or the rain is pouring heavily. You are not the person who created the sun or any weather condition so you have no reason whatsoever to dictate it's behaviour. Let the One who created it dictate it's behaviour, and if you are unhappy about it, create your own sun that shines over the whole world then you can choose how it shines, when it shines, for how long and where it shines. You can't be upset about weather, you can't at any instant be unhappy due to it.

Weather is something out of your control. If we see you sad and depressed and we ask what's wrong and you say the rain poured so heavily and messed even the clothes I was wearing, to a smaller extent we will understand you and be concerned about your wet clothes but the bottom line of it is, we would be fools to join your mourning. You don't have control over what happened, so that never has to be a reason you are sad for long. Brush it away and move on.

Not only weather but so many things exist that we never have to be depressed about. Of course it hurts that your daughter has been impregnated, but already this has happened and it won't change. You can't undo reality, you can't make her unpregnant, there is no such magic under the sun. No matter your careful parenting and strictness, this is something out of your control as it was entirely your daughter's decision and actions which led her to be pregnant. You can't be stressed about that your whole life. You can't allow that to affect your joy for long.

Never allow things out of your control to be the reason you are unhappy. Look, these things are out of your control, there is nothing you can do to determine the outcome, you can't allow them to affect your mood either and make you unhappy. Your spouse cheated on you, it happened. No matter how loyal you were, you can't dictate their behaviour. It's up to them to decide if they want to be loyal or not. That's something you don't determine. Going to traditional healers to make your partner loyal to you is simply you being evil, nothing more.

I'm now going to the point I wanted which will lead us to scripture reading. Listen to this point, you can't control something you don't own. You can't be unhappy about how something that doesn't belong to you is being used. You would be a fool to do that. You can't be upset about how your neighbour is maintaining and treating their car, like it's their car, it's none of your business. Mind your own business. (1 Thessalonians 4:11)

The same thing to God. You can't be upset over something you didn't create. You are not its creator hence you are not its owner. Most things don't belong to you, so you can't be upset about them. You just lost your car in an accident, and you are sad and depressed that you lost your car in an accident. But let's take 2 seconds to analyse the matter here.

For the car to exist, it was made of metal. Metal which came from minerals, minerals which come from the earth (land) that God made. Because God made it, it belongs to God; in other words the ownership belongs to God, God is the owner. We simply played around with what God had created (minerals) to put up a car altogether (using metal) but if God was to take back the metal and minerals He made, your car wouldn't exist. In other words, it's not your creation, it's God's creation. God is the maker or author of it.

Your car is not your doing. You don't know how many people created that car. You don't know who came up with the speedometer design your car had. So you can't be upset about losing it. Yes it was yours but if we dig a little, you know less about how that car came to being than you think you know. You know less about all people who took part in creating it. You don't know where the metal and paint to make it came from. In other words it really wasn't yours entirely. It belongs to its Creator who is God because He provided all things (materials) for it to be there. He gave you to use it which means He can take it away anytime. You can't be upset about that either. Every good thing we have is a blessing from God.

You can't be upset about the lifestyle you are living or the food you are eating. You have no idea of how that egg was created, you didn't come up with the design. If the chicken that produced it died, there is nothing you can do to bring it back to life. So don't undermine the value of the egg you are eating, be grateful to God the Creating for having an egg as breakfast.

You are sad that your phone is dead, look, you don't know how it was created and you don't know who created it. You don't know from which country the materials to make it came from. You didn't create the people who made that phone. You don't know how it was made. You were simply using it and maintaining for the time being but even its worth and maintenance is something above your control. You can't be sad about it for losing it, you just cannot be.

You can tell me that you own it because you bought it but really? If you want me to agree that you own it, first create whatever element is on your phone, because things belong to the creator. Buying it doesn't mean you own it. I'm talking about a deeper level of ownership the world might fail to understand. Because even the money you used to buy it, God made the tree from where the money, that paper money comes from, you don't know how many people touched that money before you did, so relax and know that you were simply a user not the owner by creation.

So don't be upset because you lost it, it was never yours to begin with. God says He owns everything.

Psalms 50:10-11 “For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. I know all the fowls of the mountains: and the wild beasts of the field are mine.”

I have many examples to give you. You can't be upset for failing an exam. After doing your best in preparation, thank God for whatever the outcome is. You didn't create your brain and intelligence, you don't determine how intelligent and sharp you are. You can't be sad about it, you are not the creator of your own intelligence and brains. Be thankful for what you got as a result. This was Jesus' idea in Luke.

Luke 12:22-23 “Then Jesus said to his disciples: “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; or about your body, what you will wear. For life is more than food, and the body more than clothes.”

Jesus is saying do not worry about your life. He says don't worry about your body, what you will wear. He says for your body is more than clothes. In other words, we know our clothes come from plants (cotton plant). You don't know who created the machine to spin your clothes. You don't know who designed and made it. You didn't create the machine operator who spun that wool into cloth. You can't be upset when the clothes gets torn and burnt, you were not in charge of the operation in the first place so don't try to act like you were in charge since the beginning. So know and understand that the body is more than clothes. The body is beautiful and a work of art better than any clothes it might wear. Be grateful for the body before you look at what you wear or whatever you put on.

We have no absolute reason to be sad or depressed about anything. We even do not belong to ourselves but we belong to God.

1 Corinthians 6:20 “For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.”

It says your bodies and spirits are God's. In other words they belong to God not us. We don't own ourselves, God owns us. David says we belong to God.

Psalms 100:3 “Know ye that the LORD he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.”

David says it's God who made us not we ourselves. We are His people. We don't belong to ourselves. You might still be arguing with the fact I stated when I said you don't own anything, even the house you built doesn't belong to you but to God because He created every material used in making it. The people who made the materials were even created by God.

Now the Scripture is saying even you yourself, you don't belong to yourself but to God. That's why you didn't determine when you started living i.e when you will be born, you can't choose your time of death. You can't choose which disease you have and at what time. You can't add a single hour to the length of your life here on earth.

Luke 12:25 “Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to your life?”

I want you to see that everything is out of your control. It's in the control of God. So God decides what you have and loose and at what time. So don't be afraid about what goes wrong, don't allow anything to make you sad.

Nothing is in your own control, not even your life. You belong to God. He is responsible for you. To understand this, it takes a man whose sight God has opened to see God's own spiritual truth.



DEVOTION 22

THE VITAL TRUTH - CONCLUDED

“Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!” Philippians 4:4

From Makado Vespers:

We ended saying other things are out of our control and read from the scripture where Jesus said you cannot add a single hour to the length of your life (Luke 12:25). That means there are other things we can't control, but God can control them for He has control over all things. In the Lord's words to Nebuchadnezzar He confirms that.

Daniel 4:32 (AMP) “And you shall be driven from among men and your dwelling will be with the living creatures of the field. You will be made to eat grass like the oxen, and seven times [or years] shall pass over you until you have learned and know that the Most High [God] rules in the kingdom of men and gives it to whomever He will.”

God spoke to Nebuchadnezzar and said I want you to learn that God rules in the kingdom of men. Yes, God rules in man's lives. The NIV bible says God is sovereign over all the earth. That means He exercises power and He reigns on earth and in our lives as well. I like when Nebuchadnezzar then acknowledged the Lord's Sovereignty.

Daniel 4:34-37 (AMP)

[34]And at the end of the days [seven years], I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted up my eyes to heaven, and my understanding and the right use of my mind returned to me; and I blessed the Most High [God] and I praised and honored and glorified Him Who lives forever, Whose dominion is an everlasting dominion; and His kingdom endures from generation to generation.
[35]And all the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing. And He does according to His will in the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth, and none can stay His hand or say to Him, What are You doing?

[36]Now at the same time my reason and understanding returned to me; and for the glory of my kingdom, my majesty and splendor returned to me, and my counselors and my lords sought me out; I was reestablished in my kingdom, and still more greatness [than before] was added to me.

[37]Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, Whose works are all faithful and right and Whose ways are just. And those who walk in pride He is able to abase and humble.

Nebuchadnezzar then says the people on earth are all regarded as nothing. He says the Lord does as He wills. So be grateful for what you have and what you lose. Don't be depressed, the Lord does according to what He wills, from that text we are considered to be regarded as nothing.

Back to Genesis, the angel said to Abraham you will have a child this time the following year. Others scholars who studied the bible say the child delayed with 25 years when they calculated, I don't know how accurate that is. But definitely it was long for Sarah had to think of taking Haggai and Ishmael was even older than Isaac. So it couldn't be a year, 25 years make sense. And 25 years was a year to God, it shows that the Most High does according to what He wills as Nebuchadnezzar said.

But the nice thing about God Nebuchadnezzar acknowledges is that the works of the Lord are all faithful and right and just. The Lord does what He wills, but from the same text we see that whatever the Lord wills/does is faithful, just and right. So don't allow anything to make you sad and unhappy. Just know that the Lord is ruling on earth. He remains in control. Whatever happens are His works, which are faithful and just and right.

I like when Nebuchadnezzar said I honour and praise and glorify Him who lives forever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion and whose kingdom endures from generation to generation. This tells us something about Jesus, the One God glorified. Jesus was glorified by God.

John 8:54 “Jesus replied, “If I glorify myself, my glory means nothing. My Father, whom you claim as your God, is the one who glorifies me.”

Jesus was glorified by God. Everything exists to glorify Christ. All good and bad, happy and sad moments exist to give Christ the glory. Let's read from Colossians.

Colossians 1:16-19 “For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him,”

In Christ were all things created. You were created in Christ. For your house to exist, it was created in Christ. The idea of money to exist is through Christ because John tells us that in Him were all things made, without Him not anything that was made, was made. In Him was the world created.

John 1:3,10 “Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him.”

All things were made through Jesus. All things exist through Him. Even demons and evil spirits exist through Jesus. Colossians made that clear when Paul said things visible or invisible, whether thrones or rulers, powers or authorities. That's evil spirits being referred to.

So all things were made by Christ. Read Colossians chapter one verse sixteen. It says all things have been created by Him and for Him. For Him means for His glory. So all things work together for the glory of Christ. Hence now we understand evil spirits exist to torment people, so that Jesus' power of deliverance can be displayed, hence the equation of working for the glory of Christ is completed.

Even the negative things you encounter, it's working for the glory of Christ. So don't be upset about anything, all things are working for Christ's glory. The way evil spirits feared Christ, it was evident that they were made by Him.

Luke 8:30-31 (AMP) “Jesus then asked him, What is your name? And he answered, Legion; for many demons had entered him. And they begged [Jesus] not to command them to depart into the Abyss (bottomless pit).”

The demons begged Jesus not to send them into the Abyss. This Amplified Version went on to define the Abyss as a bottomless pit. So Jesus has the power to send demons into a bottomless pit, and we literally know nothing about that Abyss. My point is everything exists for Christ's glory. Even demons and evil spirits work towards the glory of Christ that by conquering them we can glorify Christ for the power that exists in His name; thus working for Christ's glory. So do your problems too, they exist for the glory of Christ. Don't be sad about anything but in all seasons let Christ be glorified.

Nothing exists outside the spectrum of Christ's glory. Sin exists so that the saving power of redemption in Jesus' blood can be seen. Hence sin also works for the glory of Christ. The opposite of sin is righteousness, the reason we try to be holy is because we are imitating Christ's holiness. By so doing, people can praise, praise which contributes to Christ's glory.

Nebuchadnezzar saw this and said His glory is everlasting. All things work for His glory, even your problems too. So don't be upset about anything, know that it's working for Christ's glory.

If you can appreciate the idea behind the Vital Truth (the first and second sermon) you will be able to appreciate and understand scripture like, a man's life does not consist in the abundance of His riches. And scripture like, we don't only have to store up treasure for ourselves but we have to be rich towards God.

Luke 12:15,21,29 “Then he said to them, “Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions. This is how it will be with whoever stores up things for themselves but is not rich toward God.” And do not set your heart on what you will eat or drink; do not worry about it.”

Let me conclude this discussion on the Vital Truth by saying, God's faithful and love for us is so great that we can't afford to be sad and depressed at any moment. God loves us too much and He cares for us.

1 Peter 5:7 “Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.”

Because the Lord cares, we really can't afford to be sad or depressed at any moment. In Luke Jesus says God at any moment doesn't forget us.

Luke 12:6-7 “Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? Yet not one of them is forgotten by God. Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Don’t be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.”

And if God provides for every bird, how much more will He provide for us. We are more valuable than birds.

Luke 12:24 “Consider the ravens: They do not sow or reap, they have no storeroom or barn; yet God feeds them. And how much more valuable you are than birds!”

All things are working for Christ's glory. You became sick so that you can give a testimony that God healed you. Even your sickness is working for the glory of Christ. Your child passed away so that can thank God and celebrate the time you spent together before his/her death. Even your child's death is working for Christ's glory.

Those who disobey God, in doing so grace is made more available to them as Paul describes it, which contributes to Christ's glory. Those who obey God do that so Christ can be made known to the world which still works for Christ's glory.

Either obedience or disobedience, it's all working for Christ's glory. No one and nothing can turn away from participating for Christ's glory. The sooner we embrace this idea the better.

All things were created by Christ for His glory. Even your trouble, your challenges and pain are working for Jesus' glory. The reason you have trouble in your marriage is so that you can appreciate the peace you will find in Christ, still it's working for Christ's glory.

God's faithfulness, love, guidance, protection, peace, joy, glory and greatness unto us is so huge that we can't allow ourselves to be sad. Not even a single second are we to be depressed, unhappy, disappointed or have any negative emotions. God's goodness to us is so huge that at any moment we can't be sad. Let's rejoice in the Lord always, offering thanksgiving and praise.

Philippians 4:4,6 “Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.”



DEVOTION 23

FAITHFUL, JUST AND RIGHT

“Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, Whose works are all faithful and right and Whose ways are just. And those who walk in pride He is able to abase and humble.” Daniel 4:37

From Makado Vespers:

I recognised that most of my prayers were apologies to God for moments I trusted Him less. There are times we get in really challenging situations that we become absolutely sure to ourselves that God might be correct about all other things but as for this situation I'm in, He really failed. We sometimes say to ourselves, I clearly have no money to pay my bills and in debts, this time God has really failed me. After about a month, everything will fall back into place in a way we never imagined and we return to that place of perfect peace. That shows that God never failed, He was in control and He knew what He was doing all along and why!

One thing I realised is that God really never fails. For all moments I trust God less, I end up apologising to God after seeing that it was a path God was taking me on to the next big thing. Of course, whilst in the situation, you will be thinking that this is the end of you. Wait after 3 months or 3 years, you would have forgotten that it ever happened or you were ever in debt. We have to learn to trust God even in the midst of our deepest and most fierce storms.

We have to remember that God is holding our hands always and He never lets go. In all things He really works for our good, that's a statement I figured out to be true and very accurate. God never fails us. God remains even in the midst of our trials.

God created all things. He made everything we see, even us we were made by Him. Can God create a stone too big for Him to carry? That means all our problems He is able to solve. God is able to do anything, even to our challenges He can bring solutions. Nothing catches God by surprise. He knows all things before they happen. That means for all things that come our way, God knew before it happened and He too knows the end result of it all.

He has the power of stopping negative things to come our way. But if He allows them to come our way, that means His intention is for them not to harm us because God wishes good for us since He cares for us. Your problems are not there to destroy you. They are not there to kill or destroy you.

Our problems and challenges come so that God can allow us to experience a new level of miracles and of His glory. We are surrounded by difficult so that we can get a new experience and a new taste of the God we serve. When you come to God, down is the way up. Yes, you might go down, but that doesn't mean you are losing. In God, you are always a winner.

Ask Joseph, He will tell you that I went to prison, but that was my path to rule Egypt. Job discovered this and said when men are cast down, so can they say there is lifting up.

Job 22:29 “When men are cast down, then thou shalt say, There is lifting up; and he shall save the humble person.”

In God, you are always a winner. When you are in God, down is the way up. Don't worry about losing your job and being unemployed, know that by being cast down, being lifted up comes next. The title says **Faithful, Just And Right**. Let's read the scripture from where that comes from.

Daniel 4:37 “Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, Whose works are all faithful and right and Whose ways are just. And those who walk in pride He is able to abase and humble.”

The works of the king of heaven are all faithful and right and just. Don't worry about what you are going through, just stick to God. Whatever you are going through, know that they are the works of God, which are all faithful and just and right. Start celebrating your problems, instead of looking at the pain, start focusing on God's goodness, faithfulness and love. Change your focus, don't concentrate on the problems, pain or confusion. The nice thing about our Maker is that He is a rock.

Deuteronomy 32:4 “He is the Rock, his works are perfect, and all his ways are just. A faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is he.”

God is a rock, so is Jesus [when you read in Romans 9:33]. If we were made by God, if we were created in Christ, if we were made from the Rock, that means we too are of the same material. We are also rocks. One thing about the rock is that it stands in every weather condition. Whether it's sunny or rainy or cold or hot, the rock stands through all weather conditions.

We are made of that same material, we too are rocks. Let's stand bold and strong no matter what we may face and always remember that it's God in charge of our lives, He is the One in control of all things, not us. God knows what He is doing. Let's not plan ahead or think ourselves to be smarter than God. Let's learn to trust that all His works are faithful, right and just.

Let's remember that when we come to God, there is no losing but down is the way up. Let's stand firm in every situation like the rocks we are. We were created by a Rock, let's express the same character we get from the material that made us each time we are faced with something difficult and challenging.



DEVOTION 24

YOUR FUNERAL – ACCEPTING DEATH

“For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.” Colossians 3:3

From Makado Vespers:

Main Points -

- You cannot be defeated by anything, you can never lose. Fear, failure, sickness, poverty, financial lack cannot overthrow you or take you down because your victory comes from the Lord.
- Your strength never ends, you have power and endurance because your strength comes from the Lord. You can do all things through Christ who strengthens you.
- Your joy is a permanent joy. It exists through all seasons. Your joy cannot be disturbed by any situation because you rejoice in the Lord always.
- Your peace is permanent peace, one that's available even when surrounded by trouble; because your peace comes from Christ. The Lord is your peace.

When you come to God, you have to die. Yes, you really have to kill yourself and die. This death Jesus also mentioned it saying you have to crucify yourself and deny yourself. By your funeral and death, I am referring to accepting the fact that it's no longer you in charge, it's no longer you doing things, you are no longer independent and having the lead but now completely and 100% dependant on God and His power or strength.

Coming to God and making Him your dwelling place means you have accepted that it's no longer your power that makes things happen but His power. It means you have accepted the fact that you no longer bring solutions for yourself, you don't depend on you to make a way out but you depend on God to make a way for you, you depend on God to create for you a well in the wilderness and a river in the desert.

If we believe in God, that means we have accepted our death. That means we no longer believe in ourselves but we now believe in God. That means we don't believe or depend on our own strength and ability but we depend on the Lord's strength, ability and capability. That's killing ourselves and coming to God dead so that His power can be made alive in us.

Killing ourselves means removing ourselves at the centre of our lives and putting God there. Things no longer revolve around us, around what we can do, around our interests and wants but now depends on God, what He is willing to do and not to do for us, His interests and wants for us. That means we are no longer in charge and in control but we believe God to be the Shepherd hence He is the One leading and determining every step. Killing ourselves and letting God reign and take control of all things is in and on itself trusting God.

Proverbs 3:5 “Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.”

We trust the Lord with all our hearts. We don't hold back a little section or part, we give God all our trust. Trusting means relying on or putting confidence in or depending on. We do that for God. Even if we don't get our required outcome, yet our confidence remains in Him and we continue to depend on Him.

It's foolish not to trust God. God created all things, by His Word the world came to being. How can you fail to trust such a being? He created you, He knows even your deepest body organs to every smallest capillary. God is the one who knit that together. Jesus then says God knows even the number of hairs on your head.

Matthew 10:30 "But the very hairs of your head are all numbered."

God knows the number of your hairs on your head. If one falls, He replaces it. God is Alpha and Omega, which means 5 thousand years back from here He was alive, so will He even in the next 10 thousand years. He already has lived them. God knew your birth before you were born. He was attending your funeral the day you were born.

Nothing catches God by surprise. He knows all things before they happen, and He has all the power in the universe, He is the one who created the universe. Even the wisdom I am using to say this comes from Him because He made even the brain I have. We are left with no reason except to trust God completely. It's foolish not to trust God.

When you trust God and depend completely on His strength, you will start loving problems. You will fall in love with problems and start enjoying each time you are faced with pain and difficulty, because already you know that the Lord gives you victory in all things. Every little struggle you face is God giving you an opportunity to show you His faithfulness, love, goodness and mercy to you.

Each moment you are having problems, God is saying I want to give you a new experience of who I am. The only thing you are supposed to do is to know that He is in control. Once you know that, you will learn to focus and look to God in every trial and tribulation. Don't look at the pain, rather concentrate on God and His unfailing presence for you, concentrate on that rather. One thing is certain, God never fails.

Psalms 46:1-3 “God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging.”

Though the earth quakes, all walls shaking. Though the mountains fall into the sea. Though the waters rise, yet the Lord will never fail you. God won't fail you. Jesus says the Lord does not forget you.

Luke 12:6 “Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God?”

Rather He cares for you.

1 Peter 5:7 “Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.”

If God cares, that means He knows about all bills that have to be paid. He knows about the children failing at school. He knows about how you lack peace. God doesn't forget you, He cares for you.

With all this knowledge, we have to rest in God and allow ourselves to wait on Him. That's attending our funerals and killing ourselves. Let go and simply trust God. We have to learn to rest, to relax in Him. I don't think there is any other place we can rest besides this. Let's throw our fears to God and simply remember who He is.

I called this sermon "Your funeral - Accepting Death" because I want you to acknowledge that your strength is of Yahweh. It's no longer your strength making things happen, it's the strength of Yahweh. It's no longer your power and own ability you lean and depend on, it's the power of God we now depend on now. We are dead, we are no longer in charge. Our lives are now hidden in Christ, it's Christ we now depend upon.

Colossians 3:3 “For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.”

Our lives are now in Christ. Let's remember that we don't live alone, God is with us and His power alive in us. Christ is the one we can do all things through. He is our strength when we can't go on, He is our joy and peace. We no longer create our own happiness and peace, Christ is our joy and peace. Let's embrace the joy and peace we find in Christ. Let's understand that it's His power that creates ways for us and not our own.



DEVOTION 25

OBEDIENCE IN THE FACE OF GRACE

“After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice: “Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.” Revelation 7:9-

From Makado Vespers:

This sermon is very important, it connects our obedience to our salvation and shows how grace perfectly fits into the picture. Let's go through it.

The first point to note is that our obedience doesn't produce our salvation for us. Our good works have no contribution to our salvation. Our obedience does not earn us our salvation. We receive salvation as a free gift from Christ and this gift is free for everyone. There is nothing we can do to deserve it, Christ is the one who took the price, He died so we can be saved. All of us can be saved.

When going to a sinner, that means we can't say start living a righteous and holy life so you can go to heaven. Our own works doesn't contribute to our salvation. It's the righteousness of Christ we now stand and base on. To the sinner we expose the suffering of Christ and the beautiful exchange. The beautiful exchange is Christ taking our sins for Himself and giving us His righteousness freely.

2 Corinthians 5:21 "God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."

So we get saved simply by what Christ did and never by what we did. We stand in the grace and mercy of Christ and nullify our own works. Our salvation comes from the Lord and from Jesus alone, nothing we do contributes to it.

Revelation 7:9-10 “After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice: “Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.”

Heaven is ours not because of anything we did but all that Christ did. Every good blessing is ours not because of anything we have accomplished but all that Christ has done. Success is ours, prosperity is ours, good marriages are ours, good grades are ours, good health is ours not because of anything we have done but all that Christ has done. Remember, by His stripes we were healed, not because we have personal doctors or we eat health food but our healing is in His stripes. It's nothing we have done but all that Christ has done. Remember God to the Israelites said you are inheriting the land not because you are too holy, but it's because I the Lord, I am faithful and loving towards you.

Deuteronomy 9:4-6 “After the Lord your God has driven them out before you, do not say to yourself, “The Lord has brought me here to take possession of this land because of my righteousness.” No, it is on account of the wickedness of these nations that the Lord is going to drive them out before you. It is not because of your righteousness or your integrity that you are going in to take possession of their land; but on account of the wickedness of these nations, the Lord your God will drive them out before you, to accomplish what he swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Understand, then, that it is not because of your righteousness that the Lord your God is giving you this good land to possess, for you are a stiff-necked people.”

God says it's not because of your own righteousness but what Jesus did. We get saved not because of our works but by Christ's works. It's not our efforts but those of Christ. May we never stand in our own righteousness and works but those of Christ.

Even though it's like that, the theme of obedience still has to exist in our lives. The next question is, how does our obedience exist in the face of grace and mercy and Christ's suffering? If Christ freely gives us His righteousness, does that mean it's okay for us to keep doing wrong and sinning? If our works do not contribute to our salvation, does that mean even after we are saved we have to keep doing bad works?

The answer is, we now have to obey God as an appreciation to the salvation we received. Our obedience is now simply based on the idea that we love God, we fear Him and we wish good for others, that's why we obey, and not because we might be saved and find our way to heaven.

The grace we received from God through Christ produces our obedience, and our obedience never produces our salvation. It would be misleading to tell someone they need to be obedient in order to be saved because salvation is a gift from God, not a reward for good behaviour. If obedience could earn salvation, Christ's sacrifice would be unnecessary. Instead, salvation is entirely by grace, it's a gift we freely receive from God through faith.

Obedience matters but as a response to salvation, not a condition for it. Once we are saved, we obey because we love God, not because we are trying to qualify for heaven. Jesus said, “If you love me, keep my commandments” (John 14:15). This means obedience flows from love, not fear of judgement.

Remember what I said above, grace produces obedience, but obedience never produces salvation. A saved heart naturally desires to follow God, not to earn salvation, but to reflect gratitude and reverence by obeying. So when we call people to obedience, it should not be framed as a requirement to be saved but as the natural fruit of being saved. Obedience now is a fruit of grace.

Obedience is now driven by love and reverence for the One who has redeemed us. Grace does not negate obedience; it transforms it. Under grace, obedience becomes an act of love rather than mere duty. Instead of striving to prove our worth, we obey because we have already been made worthy in Christ. When we see obedience as the fruit of grace, the conclusion is: **Grace empowers what the law demands.**



DEVOTION 26

THE WORD

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.” John 1:1-3,14

From Makado Vespers:

We have to respect the Bible, we have to believe it and we have to read it. We have to prioritise it and make it important because the Bible contains the Words of God. How was the world made?

Genesis 1:11 “Then God said, “Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds.” And it was so.”

In Genesis one verse three, God said let there be light and light appeared. In the verse above, God spoke and by so doing He created vegetation and all trees and plants simply by speaking. God spoke using Words. If we read the Bible, we will come across scriptures that say thus says the Lord. Those scripture are very important because they are the Words of God. They are the same words that created the earth, the heavens and everything that we see.

We have to respect the Bible because it contains the words of God, the words of God are the same words that created the heavens and the earth, the same words that created everything we see. That's why the Bible is so important and unique and different from every novel you will read, because in it are the Words of the Maker, the same being who created everything that we see.

John 1:1-3,14 “[1]In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”

[2]He was with God in the beginning.

[3]Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.

[14]The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

The scriptures above tell us that Jesus is the Word, the word which later became flesh. Let's understand that carefully and allow it to sink in. Jesus is the word which was in the beginning with God and this word was God. That means Jesus is the word of God. When God spoke, words came out of Him, and that word which came out, later became flesh and was Jesus.

This means each time God spoke, words came out of Him. And the word of God is Jesus because Jesus is the word. So each time God spoke, He spoke Jesus. Each time God spoke, Jesus was manifested.

Evidence of this, John one verse three said in Him were all things made and without Him nothing that has been made was made. How is this possible, because Jesus is the Word. So each time God spoke, it's Jesus who was being activated. Because Jesus is the word, God created all things using words, so it's Jesus who was being implemented in the creation of all things because he is the words which were being used hence without Jesus, not anything that was made, was made. Simply because Jesus is the word, then Jesus made the heavens and the earth each time God spoke. In the New Testament in the four gospel (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) we then saw this Word becoming flesh.

Let's go to another interesting thing, we are saying that Jesus is the word which was in the beginning, He was with God and He was God. When we speak, words come out. The same thing for God, when God speaks, words come out. But we know that Jesus is the word which was in the beginning with God and which was God, Jesus is the word of God. So each time God spoke, Jesus (the words) came out. That means each time God spoke, we have to see Jesus because Jesus is the word, He is the word of God.

Each time, anywhere God in the bible God spoke, we have to see Jesus because Jesus is the word. Each time anything that God spoke happens, we have to see Jesus being activated and made alive because Jesus is the word made flesh. Jesus Himself proves this saying everything God said pointed to Jesus. Let's read the scriptures, so we can see that each time God said something, His words came out and if Jesus is the word, everything God said referred to Christ.

John 5:39-40 “You study the Scriptures diligently because you think that in them you have eternal life. These are the very Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life.”

In the scripture above, Jesus was talking to the Pharisees. He said to them you search the Scriptures thinking in them you have eternal life, but these same scriptures testify about me. One thing you have to see, it was the New Testament being written here, so the New Testament wasn't in existence yet. When they were speaking of the scriptures, they were referring to the Old Testament (the Torah) which is the Hebrew bible.

Luke 24:25,27 “He said to them, “How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.”

In the scripture above, it was the road to Emmaus. Two men were going to Emmaus, it was after Jesus had rose and He joined them. Jesus said to them how stupid are you and you are slow to believe everything the prophets said. Beginning with Moses and all the prophets Jesus showed them all that was written in the Scriptures regarding Himself. That means beginning with Moses and all the prophets are things written concerning Jesus.

John 17:17 “Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.”

John 14:6 “Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”

The two scriptures above are easy to understand. The first one says your word is truth. That means the word of God is truth. But what is the truth, Jesus said He is the truth. So if the word is the truth, and Jesus is the truth, hence the word is Jesus. Let's read a scripture that clearly shows us that Jesus is the word.

Revelation 19:11-13 “I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and wages war. His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself. He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God.”

Jesus is the Word of God. Each time we read the word, let's see Jesus. All things point to Jesus. When God spoke, His word came out. If Jesus is the word which is God and which was God, then we have to see Jesus each time God speaks. Let's break for now and continue in the Word Part 2.



DEVOTION 27

JESUS – THE ANCIENT OF DAYS

“(John testified concerning him. He cried out, saying, “This is the one I spoke about when I said, ‘He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.’) This is the one I meant when I said, ‘A man who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.” John 1:15, 30

From Makado Vespers:

John 1:1-3 “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.”

In the beginning was the Word. Jesus is the Word and this scripture says the Word was in the beginning, so Jesus was in the beginning. How is this possible that Jesus was in the beginning? Let's explain that using our biology and a few scriptures.

Matthew 1:18,22-23 “This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about : His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: “The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel” (which means “God with us”).

Matthew said Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph. Matthew goes on to say before they came together - what is being said here. That's means before they slept together for the first time, Mary was already found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit.

Verse 22 and 23 then told us that it's exactly what the prophets had said, that the virgin will conceive and give birth to a son.

How is this possible, that a virgin is becoming pregnant and giving birth to a son?

Let's do some biology, let's talking about fertilisation. We know that for fertilisation to occur, a sperm has to meet and ovum. When the two joins, then a foetus is made. That foetus starts growing and develops into a baby. But in this case there is no seed (sperm) of any man involved in the making of Jesus, it's a virgin giving birth - alone. Already the laws of biology are violated here.

For there to be a child, it starts as a foetus. A foetus comes from the union of a sperm and an ovum, but in Jesus' case, there is no sperm because it's a virgin giving birth. Matthew made it clear and said before they came together, that means before they slept together.

Then my question is, if no human sperm was involved in the biological makeup of Jesus, then who or whose seed was involved. Biology says the sperm carries part of the DNA characteristics. One of the DNA characteristics is blood, we get our blood type partly from the father. He contributes to it.

We are linked to our fathers through the sperm because it contains DNA characteristics. You are linked to your grandfathers through the same seed that's runs in the generation, but in Jesus's case, Joseph's seed wasn't involved, that means no part of Joseph was in Jesus. Jesus inherited no DNA characteristics from Joseph. So Jesus wasn't Joseph's son.

The generational linkage of Abraham to David was contained in Joseph, but wasn't passed on to Jesus because Joseph took no part in the making of Jesus, hence we really can't say Jesus is the offspring of David, rather He is the Lord of them all, both David and Abraham. Jesus proves this in the scripture below.

Matthew 22:41-45 “While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, “What do you think about the Messiah? Whose son is he?” “The son of David,” they replied. He said to them, “How is it then that David, speaking by the Spirit, calls him ‘Lord’? For he says, “ ‘The Lord said to my Lord: “Sit at my right hand until I put your enemies under your feet.” ’If then David calls him ‘Lord,’ how can he be his son?”

In the Scripture above Jesus makes it clear that He can't be the son of David. Because the DNA characteristics of Abraham and David where contained in Joseph, they weren't passed on to Jesus because Joseph's sperm didn't lead to the formation of Jesus. Jesus was born by a virgin. So Jesus is Lord even unto Moses, Abraham and David.

Let's skip the relationship Jesus had to David because it might be confusing for some, I don't want to lose any reader here, let's go back to biology. The Bible refers to the sperm as seed, it's the more moral way of explaining it. But I saw that by using seed, I might lose some readers here and I won't be able to carefully explain the biology. I will use sperm to show you exactly how the things fit.

Let's have our last lesson of biology before we start reading scripture. Now let's focus on Mary, we have explained Joseph enough. Regarding Mary, let's look at how food is passed down from the mother to the child. There is no direct blood linkage between the mother and the child when passing food during the time the mother is pregnant. There is a placenta which blocks direct linkage. The food is passed through absorption, the food and nutrients diffuse from the mother and the child absorbs, hence from biology we know that the blood of Mary and Jesus never met. That means Jesus had his own unique blood, which Joseph contributed nothing to, and it never met with the blood of Mary

Jesus' blood was unique, it was directly from God as Jesus was put into Mary's womb by the Holy Spirit. That's why only Jesus' blood has power to forgive sins, because no human contributed to the makeup of his blood. It was the blood of God Himself. That's why no other ordinary man can die on the cross and we can be saved, your husband or wife can't die to get us saved, their blood means nothing. The blood of Jesus is the blood of God Himself because Jesus is God. Jesus was just God in human form, and as humans we took our Maker and nailed Him to the cross.

That's why only through the blood of Jesus we can be saved, because it's the blood of God Himself. Only the blood of Jesus can save us and set us free.

From our biology lesson we saw that, Jesus was unique. He wasn't a result of any human communion, but was put in Mary's womb by the Holy Spirit. Hence Jesus was already existing, He was always there, He is the word since the beginning, He was in the beginning with God. In the New Testament, the word was just being made flesh and taking a new form, but He was always with God. The word was entering into the world.

John 1:9 'The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world.'

But Jesus was always there. When Shadreck, Misheck and Abednigo were in the fire, God sent His word and Jesus appeared with them.

Daniel 3:24-25 "Then King Nebuchadnezzar leaped to his feet in amazement and asked his advisers, 'Weren't there three men that we tied up and threw into the fire?' They replied, 'Certainly, Your Majesty.' He said, 'Look! I see four men walking around in the fire, unbound and unharmed, and the fourth looks like a son of the gods.'"

Other versions say the son of man. That means Jesus was always there. He was present with these three men in the fire. Let's finish with John the baptist. John the baptist was born before Jesus, we see that when we read in Luke. In terms of age, John the baptist was older than Jesus. But John said, Jesus, the one who comes after me is preferred before me for He existed before me.

John 1:15,30 "(John testified concerning him. He cried out, saying, 'This is the one I spoke about when I said, 'He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.') This is the one I meant when I said, 'A man who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.'

Now we can fully appreciate the idea that the world was made through Jesus, He was in the beginning with God. When He came on earth as the four gospels testify, He wasn't coming for the first time, but always He was in the world. He wasn't taking a new form.

John 1:10 "He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him."

Jesus is the Ancient of Days.



DEVOTION 28

THE WORD (PART 2)

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.” John 1:1-3

From Makado Vespers:

In the beginning was the word. Jesus is the word, so Jesus was in the beginning. Yes, Jesus was in the beginning. That means He was present at the start before all things began. In the beginning, before the earth and the heavens were made, there was Jesus in the beginning.

Revelation 22:13 “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.”

Jesus said He is the Alpha. The Alpha is the first letter of the Greek alphabet and Omega is the last letter. With regards to alpha, Jesus was saying He is the origin, He is the beginning, He is the start, He is the initiation. That's what we are reading in John, in the beginning, before anything started, Jesus was present. He says I'm the Alpha, Jesus is the beginning.

The verse goes on to say and the Word was with God. Jesus was with God in the beginning. Before anything else started, Jesus was there with God. This shows us how close and intimate the relationship between God and Jesus is. They were together in the beginning.

The next verse then says and the word was God. Jesus is God. Jesus and God is one being. He is the Lord. This shows us that Jesus is God. Through Jesus was the world made, and without Jesus nothing that has been made was made. This verse brings me to the next interesting point.

The point is, we are completely dependent on Jesus for all things. Since Jesus made all things, the land we are standing on is His, it came from Him. The clothes we are wearing came from plants and animal skin He made. If we remove everything He created, nothing remains because even our bodies and spirits, He created.

Without Jesus nothing that has been made was made. So each time we look around us, let's see Jesus and the art of His hands. The stars, the stones, water, plants, all minerals, Jesus created them all. He made all things, without Jesus nothing exists. The world was made through Him.

John 1:10 “He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him.”

If the world was made through Him, how can He fail to sustain it. Since Jesus is the creator, that means He is the sustainer too. If you create something, it's your responsibility to look after it. Jesus created the world, that means He is the sustainer of it, including us, we are kept by the Lord. That's why we come across scriptures where Jesus says without me, there is nothing you can do.

John 15:5 “I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.”

And other scriptures that say in Jesus we live and move and have our being.

Acts 17:28 ‘For in him we live and move and have our being.’ As some of your own poets have said, ‘We are his offspring.’

Jesus is the creator, that means he too is the sustainer. Sustaining means taking care of. It's His responsibility now. Why did Jesus have to die for us, because He created us. It's His duty to make sure everything is going okay. That's why when we sinned He became the price. He came and redeemed us, because when you create something of your own, when you have an invention, it's your duty to redeem it when it fails.

Galatians 3:13 “Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: “Cursed is everyone who is hung on a pole.”

Let's finish by recognising the fact that everything we have came from Christ. The wife you have, the children you have, it's Christ who created because without Christ, nothing that exist would exist. Regarding children you might say, how do they belong to Jesus when I'm the one who gave birth to them. Remember, children are a blessing from God.

Psalms 127:3 “Children are a heritage from the Lord, offspring a reward from him.”

Even the brains we have, they were created by Christ. We didn't create our own brains, we were given by God. Yet we choose not to fill the brains He gave us with His word. Rather, we fill them with all evil plans. Using the brain Christ created and gave them, others choose to argue that He doesn't exist and that He isn't God. What a shame? Using the mouth He created, others choose not to pray. He freely gave us eyes and understanding, yet others never read the Bible. Jesus, you are the Alpha and Omega, please come and help this generation, come and help us in these times!



DEVOTION 29

EXPLORING “THE WORD”

“The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. Out of his fullness we have all received grace in place of grace already given. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known.” John 1:14,16-18

From Makado Vespers:

John 1:9-11 “The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him.”

Jesus is the Light of the world. He was in the beginning with God. Through Jesus, all things were made. Jesus was in the world, the world was made through Him, but the world did not recognise Him. He came to His own, the ones who had received prophecies that He is coming, they failed to recognise Him.

John 1:4-5 “In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.”

In Jesus was life. The life in Jesus is the one which gave birth to all things. Even today, it can still give life to everything dead in your life. The life in Jesus can resurrect your marriage. The life that was in Jesus was the light of men.

What does light do, it manifests sight. You can clearly see in the light that in darkness. If there is light, you can now see and do what you have to do seeing clearly, hence light brings about purpose and vision. Light chases away fear because it eliminates darkness.

If the life in Jesus is our light, that means it's there to guide us, lead us into fulfilling our purpose. The life in Jesus being the light of man simply means Jesus gives us direction, we get our new to-do list from Jesus.

Verse five said the light shone in the darkness and the darkness comprehended it not. To comprehend is to understand. This simply means Jesus came into the world, but the world failed to understand Him. This links with verse nine to eleven where the true light was entering into the world but the world did not recognise Him and His own received Him not.

Don't be surprised by those who fail to understand Jesus, those who deny the existence of Christ and those who see Jesus simply as a mere prophet and not the Lord. Remember the light shone in the darkness (the world) and it failed to understand Him.

John 1:12-13 “Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God.”

To those who managed to understand Him, to those who welcomed Him and appreciated His existence, He gave them the right to become children of God. From Jesus we get the right to become children of God. He takes us away from the identity of merely being children due to blood/ natural descent, or the will of man, or the will of the flesh, but He connects to the will of God. He fulfils it and completes it in us.

John 1:14,16-18 “The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. Out of his fullness we have all received grace in place of grace already given. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known.”

The world saw the glory of the word, Jesus Christ. Read the gospels, from Matthew to John and you will see the glory of this Word revealed to the world. Jesus came from the Father, and He is full of grace and truth. The law came through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus.

Out of His fullness, we have all received grace upon grace. I like another version which says, out of His fullness, we have all received one blessing on top of the other. No one has seen God but Jesus, who is God Himself and in the closest relationship with God has revealed Him to us. Jesus has made God known to us.

Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

John 1:29 “The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world”



DEVOTION 30

THE ART OF WITNESSING

“You yourselves can testify that I said, ‘I am not the Messiah but am sent ahead of him.’ He must become greater; I must become less.” The one who comes from above is above all; the one who is from the earth belongs to the earth, and speaks as one from the earth. The one who comes from heaven is above all. He testifies to what he has seen and heard, but no one accepts his testimony. Whoever has accepted it has certified that God is truthful. For the one whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God gives the Spirit without limit.

The Father loves the Son and has placed everything in his hands.” John 3:28,30-35

From Makado Vespers:

John 1:6-9 “There was a man sent from God whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe. He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world.”

There was a man sent from God whose name was John. John was a man sent from God, so are we. We are men and women sent from God. That means God knows our mission, He is the One who assigned it to us. Our purpose comes from the One who sent us. Let's not allow people to dictate how we live or the type of clothes we wear. Even the type of music we listen to, we are people sent from God, God is the one who dictates our characters and lives.

Let's always live in this consciousness, that we are men and women sent from God. The moment we sit long in that meditation, it will have an effect even in our characters, our behaviours and general way of life. We would make efforts to escape the way the world lives and put on God's righteousness and holiness.

John came as a witness to testify concerning that light. What we are to witness has been defined here, we are to give a testimony of the light which is our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. In our daily lives, we stand as witnesses testifying of what exactly?

Our anger issues and our depression and sadness, our lack of joy and peace, the secular music we listen to, having many sexual partners, drinking beer and smoking, do we become witnesses of this Light by doing that.

Verse seven goes on to say that through him all men might believe. That's the reason why we testify, that through us all men might believe. Do all men believe through us, or we are busy chasing away people from this Light. Men have to believe through our testimony, the greatest testimony we can give is the kind of lifestyle we live. By this testimony, we become witnesses and the whole world can believe.

Another important thing is that, the whole world has to believe the light which is Jesus, not believing us the witnesses. Most religious leaders have made themselves the light, instead of the world believing Jesus the light, they now believe the witnesses more than they believe the true light. We are called to believe in the light, not the witnesses that testify of it.

Verse eight said he (John) was not the light. He only came as a witness to the light. All religious leaders, let's always remember that we are not the light, let's avoid a situation where people look up to us more than they look up to the true light which is Jesus. Let's avoid situations where people put more trust and confidence, more joy and comfort in us more than in Jesus. We are not that light, we are only witnesses to it. Jesus is the true light.

John 1:15 “(John testified concerning him. He cried out, saying, “This is the one I spoke about when I said, ‘He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.’ ”)”

This was the testimony of John. He said Jesus has surpassed me. Other versions say the one who comes after me (after John. Jesus was the one being referred to) John says he is preferred before me. In other words He is greater. The art of witnessing and learning from John the baptist is recognising that we are not that light, we stand as witnesses to it. And let's never take positions in people's lives where we become that light to them, that light which is Jesus.

John 3:28,30-35 “You yourselves can testify that I said, ‘I am not the Messiah but am sent ahead of him.’ He must become greater; I must become less.” The one who comes from above is above all; the one who is from the earth belongs to the earth, and speaks as one from the earth. The one who comes from heaven is above all. He testifies to what he has seen and heard, but no one accepts his testimony. Whoever has accepted it has certified that God is truthful. For the one whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God gives the Spirit without limit. The Father loves the Son and has placed everything in his hands.”

John the baptist said Jesus must become greater and I less. That's the art of successful witnesses. Even when preaching to people, let's talk less about ourselves and all that we are doing and more about Christ and what He is doing. That's being true witnesses.

Jesus is the one who comes from above, He is above all. As witnesses we are from the earth, we belong to the earth and speak as people from the earth. But Jesus, the light, is from heaven. He testifies what He has seen and heard from the God. Let's allow this light who is Jesus to come into our lives and transform us. In Jesus we have eternal life!

Closing Thoughts:

As we conclude this journey of faith, I trust that you have been strengthened and encouraged to remain unwavering in your walk with Christ. Standing firm is not a one-time decision; it is a daily commitment to trust, obey, and lean on God in every season.

Remember, the strength to stand does not come from within ourselves but from the power of the Holy Spirit at work in us. It is God who upholds us, sustains us, and leads us in victory. My prayer is that this devotional has ignited within you a renewed determination to stand firm, no matter what comes your way.

May your life be a testimony of God's steadfast love, and may His power keep you unshaken in every circumstance.

— Vespers Makado

Conclusion:

Title: The Call to Persevere

As you close this book, I want to leave you with this truth: standing firm is not just about enduring hardship; it is about walking in faith with unwavering conviction. To stand firm in Christ is to trust in His promises, live by His truth, and remain anchored in His love.

You are called to persevere, to press forward with confidence, knowing that He who called you is faithful. Every challenge you face, every battle you fight, can be overcome through His strength.

I pray that the words in this book have equipped you with the courage to stand firm. May His truth guide you, His Spirit empower you, and His love sustain you as you walk boldly in faith.

With Kingdom blessings,
— Vespers Makado

About the Author:

Vespers Makado is a passionate servant of Christ. He has a heart to see the Body of Christ strengthened through the teaching of God's Word and the application of Kingdom principles.

Through his writing, preaching, and leadership, Vespers seeks to empower believers to walk in boldness, endure hardships with faith, and live in the fullness of God's promises. His deep commitment to discipleship, spiritual growth, and Kingdom expansion has made him a trusted voice in the Christian community.

He lives with his family, continuing to serve the Kingdom through teaching, leadership, and writings. Vespers' heart is to see all believers remain steadfast, grow in the knowledge of God's truth, and fulfil their divine purpose.

This Book was written in December 2024



STANDING FIRM

Standing Firm by Makado Vespers is a devotional designed to strengthen faith, inspire perseverance, and deepen spiritual resilience in the face of adversity. Through daily reflections and scripture-based insights, it empowers believers to trust God unwaveringly, even in the most challenging seasons of life. The book explores themes of endurance, divine purpose, and steadfast commitment to one's faith, encouraging readers to stand firm in their convictions despite trials and uncertainties. Each devotion serves as a guiding light, offering wisdom, encouragement, and a renewed sense of hope for those seeking spiritual growth. With a powerful message of courage and trust in God's plan, Standing Firm is more than just a devotional—it is a call to live boldly, walk faithfully, and remain unshaken in the journey of faith.